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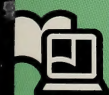
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# English 30

## Module 1


### The World of Language



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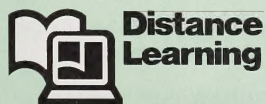
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# **English 30**

## **Module 1**

# **THE WORLD OF LANGUAGE**





This document is intended for	
Students	✓
Teachers (English 30)	✓
Administrators	
Parents	
General Public	
Other	

English 30  
 Student Module  
 Module 1  
 The World of Language  
 Alberta Distance Learning Centre  
 ISBN No. 0-7741-1020-1

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Welcome to English 30!

We think you'll find this course interesting and enjoyable.

We've included a prerecorded audiocassette with this module. The cassette will help you work through the material and it will enhance your listening skills.

So whenever you see this icon,

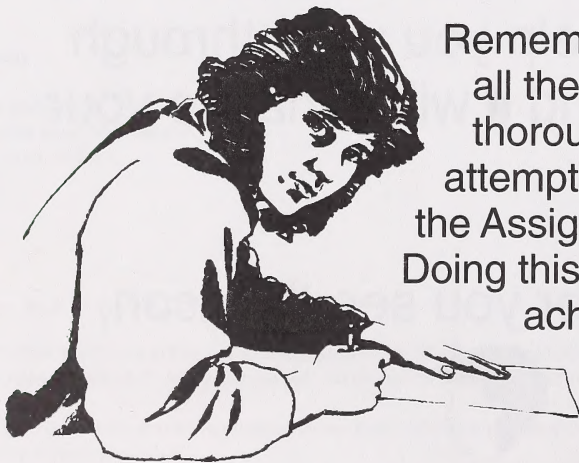


turn on your tape and listen.



One important resource you'll be using all the time is your notebook. Because there are no response lines provided in the Student Module Booklets of this course, you'll need a notebook or lined paper to respond to questions, complete charts, and answer questionnaires. It's important to keep your lined paper handy as you work through the material and to keep your responses together in a notebook or binder for review purposes later. Read all of the questions carefully, and respond to them as completely as possible. Then compare your responses with the ones supplied in the Appendix.

Some of your personal responses you'll be asked to keep in a separate folder – your Writing Folder. This process is explained in Module 1.



Remember to work through all the module activities thoroughly before attempting the questions in the Assignment Booklet. Doing this will help you to achieve better success in your studies.

Good luck.



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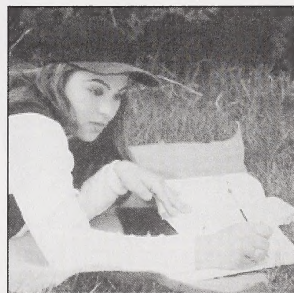


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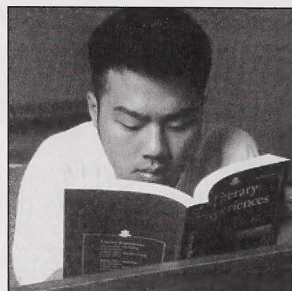


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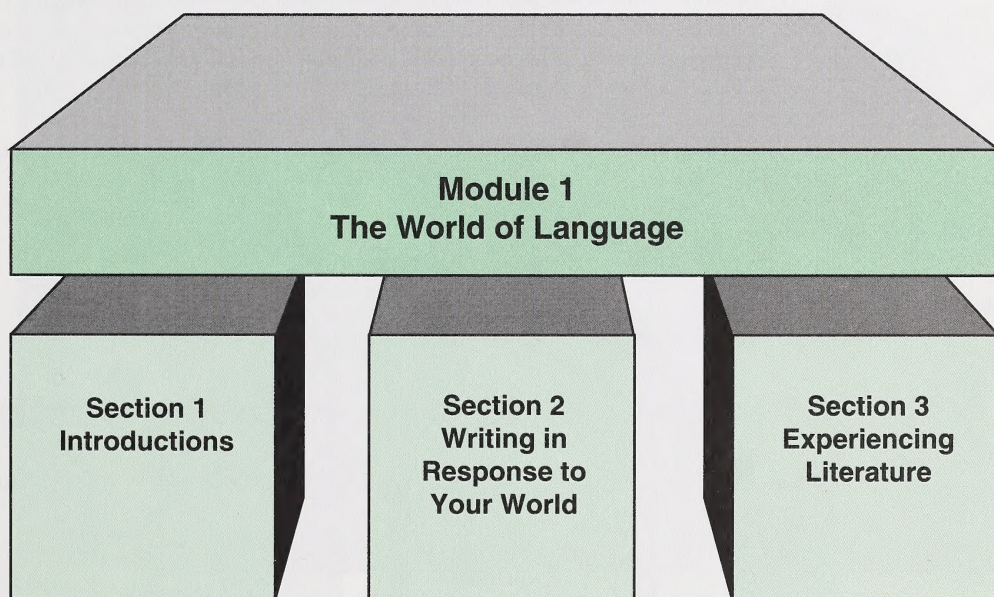


## MODULE OVERVIEW



You're about to embark on the final English course of your high school years. English 30 is meant to be both a culmination of all you've learned in previous courses and, for many students, a jumping-off point for future studies.

Module 1 is designed principally to get you thinking about language and the sorts of issues with which you'll be dealing in greater detail as the course progresses. Section 1 will familiarize you with the structure of the course and introduce you to yourself as a user of language. Section 2 gets into the writing process and looks particularly at expressive writing and personal responses. Finally, in Section 3 you'll begin to think about literature – stories in particular; this will prepare you for Module 2, which provides a more intensive study of the short story.



## Evaluation

Your mark in this module will be determined by how well you complete the work in your Assignment Booklet. In this module you must complete two section assignments and one final module assignment. The mark distribution is as follows:

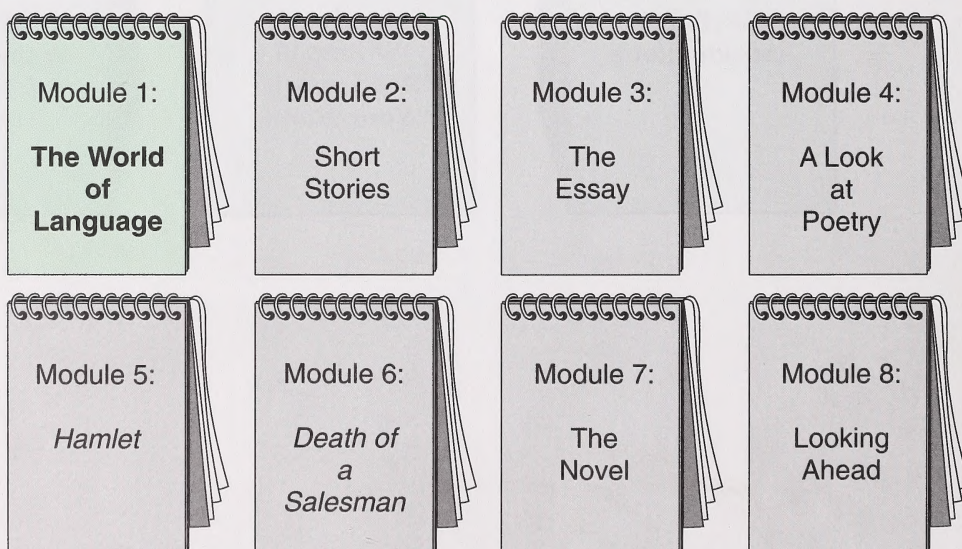
Section 2 Assignment	35 marks
Section 3 Assignment	50 marks
Final Module Assignment	15 marks
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100 marks</b>

**NOTE:** Upon completing this course, you'll be required to write an English 30 Diploma Examination in addition to a distance-learning final test. Therefore, it's important that you be familiar with the types of questions asked and the types of answers expected on a diploma exam. This course will attempt to prepare you for the sorts of questions you'll encounter when you write your diploma exam.

For a fuller discussion of the English 30 evaluation system and your diploma exam, see Section 1: Activity 1 of this module.

## COURSE OVERVIEW

English 30 contains eight modules.





## SECTION

## 1

## INTRODUCTIONS



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How sensitive are you to the world of language all around you? How much attention do you pay to the vastly important role language and communication play in your life?

In Section 1 you'll be asked to consider how English operates in your world. You'll also be asked to think about the influences that have made you the unique user of language that you are.

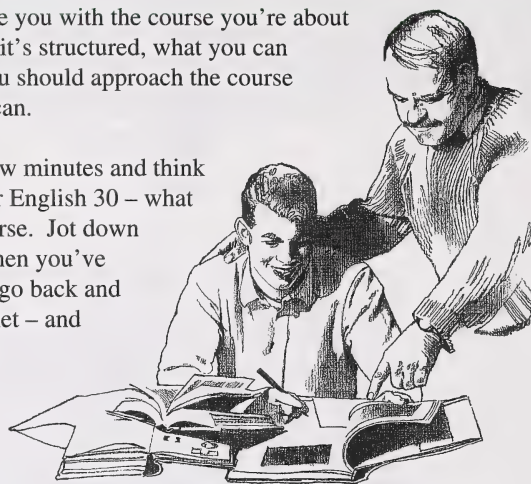
But before all that, you'll be introduced to this English 30 course so that you'll know what to expect and – perhaps more importantly – what will be expected of you.

## Activity 1: About This Course



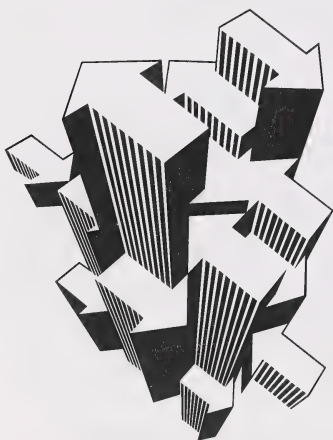
This first activity is designed to familiarize you with the course you're about to undertake; it will introduce you to how it's structured, what you can expect to find in the modules, and how you should approach the course if you want to obtain the best results you can.

1. Before going any further, stop for a few minutes and think about what your personal goals are for English 30 – what you hope to achieve by taking the course. Jot down your thoughts and save them; then, when you've completed all eight modules, you can go back and see how many of your goals you've met – and whether any of them changed as you worked through the course.



### The Structure of the Course

This English 30 course consists of eight units, called *modules*; each module is self-contained in its own *Module Booklet*. The modules are divided into a number of *sections* (usually three per module), and each of these sections is subdivided, in turn, into several *activities*; every activity addresses one or more concepts important to the course. Activities contain instructional material along with questions and exercises that allow you to put into practice what you're learning.



Since no space is provided in the Module Booklets for the work you'll be assigned in the activities, you'll be expected to supply a notebook or looseleaf binder for this purpose. Marks won't ordinarily be assigned for this work (though if you're taking the course in a classroom situation, your teacher or learning facilitator may choose to grade it); however, it's very important that you do these exercises since they're designed to help you develop the skills you'll need if you want to do well in the assignments and the final test, on both of which you will be graded.

Along with your notebook or binder, you'll also be asked to keep a folder (which you'll have to provide yourself) of your personal writing. This will be explained in more depth in Section 2.

At the end of each Module Booklet, you'll find an *Appendix* containing *suggested answers* to questions asked in the module activities. You'll be responsible for comparing your responses to these suggested answers, bearing in mind that in many cases there will be no right or wrong responses; rather, the suggested answers, as their name implies, are presented as reasonable sample responses. It will be up to you (unless your learning facilitator structures things differently) to judge whether your own ideas are equally reasonable.



For obvious reasons, suggested answers won't normally be provided for the personal writing you'll be doing for your folder. At times, however, samples of student writing may be given to help guide you in evaluating your own responses.

If you've examined any of your Module Booklets, you've probably noted the definitions that appear from time to time in the margins of the pages. Whenever an important literary term first occurs in the course, it appears in bold print in the text, and a definition is presented in the margin beside it. These definitions all appear again, in alphabetical order, in the *Glossary* that comprises the first part of the Appendix of each module. In Module 8 all the definitions that have been given throughout the course are gathered together in a *Master Glossary*. When you've finished the course, you'll be expected to be familiar with all the terms that appear in this glossary.



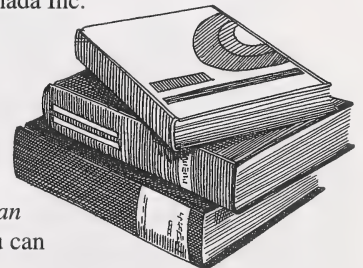
The Follow-up Activities are another feature of this course. These activities are of two sorts: *Extra Help* and *Enrichment*. The Extra Help is designed to give you more instruction and practice with material that you may have found difficult. By contrast, the Enrichment is meant to extend your understanding and/or knowledge of the section's material if you've found it particularly interesting or informative. The Follow-up Activities are optional, but if you want to get as much out of the course as you can, you should in most instances do either the Extra Help or the Enrichment. Of course there's nothing stopping you from trying both.

## Texts and Media



The principal textbook required for this course is *Literary Experiences Volume Two*, edited by Iveson, Oster, and McClay and published by Prentice-Hall Canada Inc.

This book is a collection of stories, poems, essays, and plays written by both Canadian and non-Canadian authors; throughout the course it will be referred to simply as *Literary Experiences*.



As well as this textbook, you'll be studying two plays – Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and the modern play *Death of a Salesman* by Arthur Miller. You'll also be reading one novel, which you can select from the following extensive list.

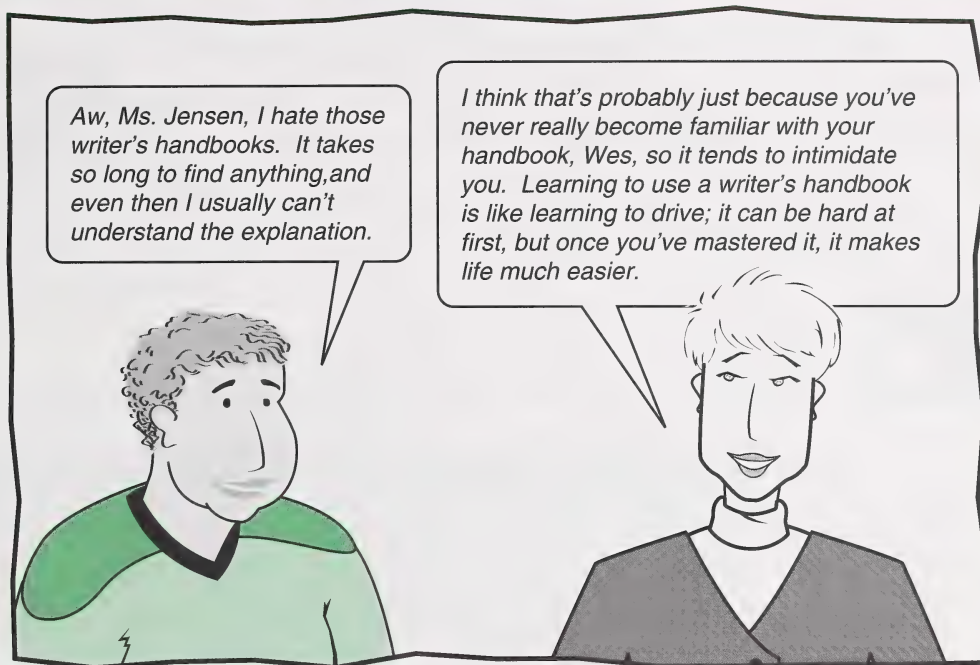


2. Read through the list of novel titles that follows, and think about your initial responses to the titles. Which ones interest you the most? Why? Are there any that don't seem at all interesting? Why? How do you plan to choose the one you'll read?

### English 30 Novels

- *The Bean Trees* by Barbara Kingsolver (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, Inc.)
- *Davita's Harp* by Chaim Potok (Toronto: Random House of Canada Limited)
- *A Farewell to Arms* by Ernest Hemingway (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company)
- *The Grapes of Wrath* by John Steinbeck (Markham, Ontario: Penguin Books Canada Limited)
- *Great Expectations* by Charles Dickens (Toronto/New York: Bantam Classic Press)
- *Mizzly Fitch: The Light, the Sea, the Storm* by Murray Pura (Toronto: Simon and Pierre Publishing Company Limited)
- *Monsignor Quixote* by Graham Greene (Markham, Ontario: Penguin Books Canada Limited)
- *The Mosquito Coast* by Paul Theroux (New York: Avon Books)
- *The Outsider* by Albert Camus (Toronto: Penguin Books)
- *Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen (Oxford: Oxford University Press)
- *Saint Maybe* by Anne Tyler (Toronto: Penguin Books Canada Limited)
- *The Stone Angel* by Margaret Laurence (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Inc.)
- *Under the Ribs of Death* by John Marlyn (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Inc.)
- *Wild Geese* by Martha Ostenso (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Inc.)
- *Windflower* by Gabrielle Roy (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Inc.)
- *Wuthering Heights* by Emily Bronte (Oxford: Oxford University Press)

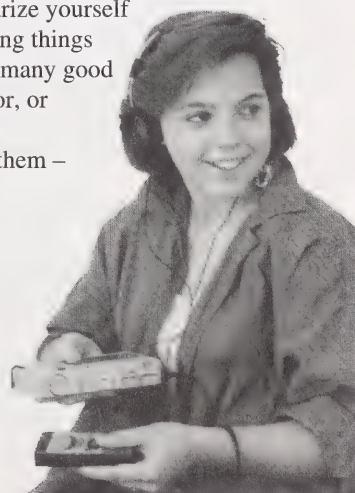
Along with these books you must also get hold of a good dictionary and a writer's handbook (also called a handbook of English). Are you already in the habit of referring to a handbook when you write? If not, it's a habit you should develop.



Because writer's handbooks can seem a bit intimidating until you're used to them, students sometimes shy away from using them. The fact is, though, that a good handbook is a writer's best friend; it can tell you – usually very quickly – whatever you want to know about rules of grammar and punctuation, sentence structures, set-ups for different types of papers (for example, research papers, complete with footnotes and bibliographies), spelling rules, principles of organization...the list goes on and on.

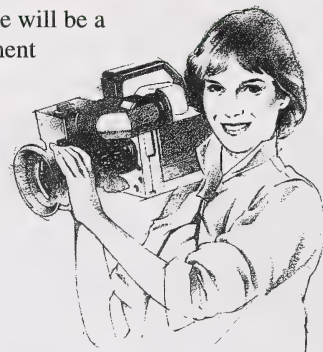
A writer's handbook is required for this course; if you don't already own or have access to one, make sure you obtain one and take some time to really familiarize yourself with it. Look at how the book is organized, and practise looking things up with the help of the index and table of contents. There are many good writer's handbooks available. Your teacher, learning facilitator, or librarian should be able to recommend one for you. For more information about writer's handbooks – and practice in using them – see the Extra Help for this section.

Accompanying the printed material of this course is a series of prerecorded audiotapes – often referred to as *companion audiotapes* – designed to guide you through the activities in each module. You'll need an audiocassette player to listen to these tapes; you'll also have to have access to an audiocassette recorder – along with a blank cassette or two – in order to be able to complete the listening and speaking exercises and assignments that occur from time to time.





Though a videocassette player/recorder isn't mandatory, there will be a number of optional videos recommended, usually in Enrichment activities, that you'd likely find very helpful. There will also be a number of optional exercises and activities that can be completed by recording yourself and/or others on videotape.



## Evaluation



Your final English 30 mark will be determined by combining your school-awarded mark in this course with the grading you receive on your English 30 Diploma Exam. At present each of these two components normally contributes 50 percent to your final mark.

School-Awarded Mark 50%	Diploma Exam Mark 50%
Final English 30 Mark 100%	

### School-Awarded Mark

Accompanying each module in this course you'll find an *Assignment Booklet* containing assignments to be completed at the end of most sections of the module. Sometimes the booklet will also include a *Final Module Assignment* to be completed when you've finished the entire module. These assignments are what you'll be submitting for a grading, so it's important that you do your very best work as you complete them. You'll submit your entire Assignment Booklet for evaluation at the end of each module unless your learning facilitator instructs you otherwise. At times you'll be asked to submit an audiocassette or (optionally) a videocassette as well.

If you're taking this course directly through the Alberta Distance Learning Centre, your final school-awarded mark will be determined by combining your gradings in all your assignments along with the result of your final test. If you're taking the course in a classroom, your teacher or learning facilitator will decide just how your final school-awarded mark will be determined.

### Diploma Exam Mark

As an English 30 student, you'll be required to write an Alberta Education Diploma Examination at or near the end of your course. This exam consists of two parts, each written at a separate sitting.

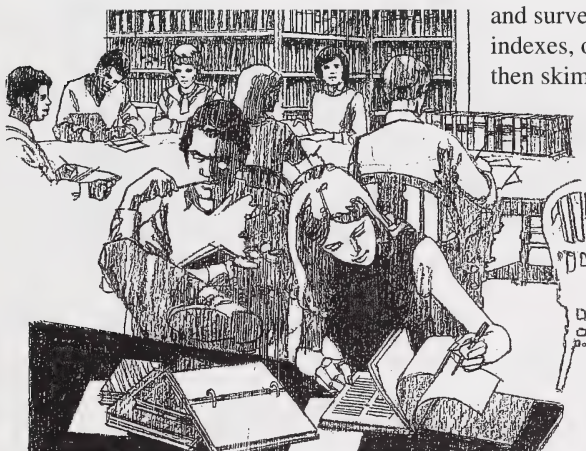
**Part A: Written Response** is designed to evaluate your ability to express your ideas in writing. In this exam you'll be asked to complete two pieces of writing: the first tests your ability to understand and respond to a passage of literature you haven't before encountered while the second examines your skills in developing an idea (or thesis) as it relates to literature you've studied.

**Part B: Reading** assesses your ability to read and comprehend passages from works of literature. In this part of the exam, multiple-choice questions, based on a series of literary passages, are presented to you. They'll ask you to analyse the passages in order to test such things as your ability to make inferences, pick out irony, distinguish theses and arguments, use context to determine meaning, and recognize literary devices and the effects they're designed to achieve.

Throughout the course (beginning with Module 2) questions like those you'll find on your diploma exam will be given you from time to time, and part of Module 8 will be devoted to preparing you for this examination. By the time you take your English 30 Diploma Exam, you should be ready for it.

## Previewing Your Course Materials

Right now take a few minutes to familiarize yourself with your printed course materials – your textbook, the eight module booklets, and, if you've already acquired one, your writer's handbook. This will involve looking through the various books, noting how they're organized,



and surveying such features as tables of content, indexes, overviews, and glossaries. You should then skim through at least this first Module

Booklet noting things like activity names, headings, and subheadings – and getting a general feel for what to expect as you work through it and how it's presented. Good readers almost always preview serious reading material this way; it's much like referring to a map before setting out on a trip in order to find out where you're going and what you're likely to encounter on the way.

3. When you've finished your preview of the printed course materials, test your familiarity with them by seeing how quickly you can go back to these same materials and retrieve the following information. The questions themselves may seem trivial; what's important is what answering them tells you about the effectiveness of your previewing.

- a. How many selections in *Literary Experiences* were written by Irish writers?
- b. T. S. Eliot's poem "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" appears in *Literary Experiences*. Where was T. S. Eliot born?
- c. Into what four genres are selections in *Literary Experiences* divided in the Index of Selections by Genre?







Boy, Ms. Jensen, isn't this just a bit nit-picky? There's no way anyone could pick out details like these when previewing a book!

I think you've missed the point, Rico. I didn't expect you to have noted Eliot's birthplace in your preview; but I do hope you noticed the Author Biographies section of your text, so you'll know where to go to get that specific bit of information quickly.



- d. Give the title of **one** of the two works of drama included in *Literary Experiences*.
- e. If you were told to read the selections in *Literary Experiences* dealing with war, which page in the book would direct you to those selections?
- f. On what page does your handbook discuss coherence in writing?
- g. Referring to your handbook, set up the following information as if it were an entry in a bibliography for a research paper.

*Lord of the Flies*, written by William Golding and published in London by Faber and Faber Limited in 1958.

- h. What does this icon or symbol, appearing frequently in your module booklets, tell you?



- i. In what section and activity of Module 1 of this course is the writing process discussed?
- j. Indicate the place in each Module Booklet that tells you how many marks are assigned to each assignment.

**Compare your responses with those in the Appendix, Section 1: Activity 1.**

Now that you're familiar with the structure of this course and the materials you'll be using, it's time to turn your attention to what it's really all about – language and the role it plays in your life.



## Activity 2: Language in Your Life



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### You – A Unique User of Language

Language. You use it constantly, but how much thought do you give it? Many thinkers and scientists have maintained that it's the ability to communicate by way of an acquired language that distinguishes human beings from all other known forms of life. Recent work with some of the higher primates has cast some doubt on this distinction as absolute, but the fact remains that the vastly complex language systems used by human beings set us apart from all other creatures.

Still, most people don't give language much thought. On any given day they talk with their friends, listen to teachers or colleagues at work, read books, newspapers, traffic signs, and labels, watch television, listen to the radio, write letters, operate computers; but it all seems so natural they seldom stop to consider the tremendously complex task they're performing. The use of a vast array of oral and visual symbols to formulate, convey, receive, and interpret complicated ideas is truly a remarkable achievement; and being able to do it so easily that we hardly notice it makes it that much more remarkable.

Have you ever thought about yourself as a user of language – as someone who constantly receives information, processes it, makes inferences and judgements, and, in turn, communicates information to others? The fact is that as a language user (as in every other aspect of your life) you're a unique individual. The way you express yourself, how you interpret what you hear, see, and read, the manner in which you respond to what others communicate to you – in these ways and in many more you behave like no other individual who's ever lived.





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What makes you a unique user of language? Partly it's your genetic makeup; partly it's the family, community, nation, and culture in which you've been raised; and partly it's the sum total of your life experiences, something that's obviously unique to you. It's easy to forget that every significant experience you have affects the way you see the world and how you respond to and interpret new information, but it's a fact. To use a simple illustration, if you were reading an account about someone's adventures mountain climbing, you'd be much better able to enter into that person's experiences if you'd tried mountain climbing yourself. And whether you'd enjoyed the experience or had a bad fall would certainly colour how you'd respond to what you were reading.

1. Here's something you may never have done before. Take a few minutes and try to list some of the major experiences and influences in your life that have seriously affected the way you see your world and helped make you the person – and the user of language – you are today. Consider such things as your cultural and ethnic background, your community, your family and friends, along with any significant individual experiences you've had.

**Compare your response with the one in the Appendix, Section 1: Activity 2.**

## The Oral Tradition

At its most basic level, language is spoken. Until the invention of writing, only a few thousand years ago, spoken language was all there was; all information was transmitted by word of mouth, and knowledge was passed on from one generation to the next by the process of oral instruction and memorization. Some of our most enduring works of literature, such as the long epic poems of ancient Greece *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*, were originally transmitted orally from person to person and remembered. Most people today, with instant information at their fingertips, have lost the power of memorization on which their ancestors depended and stand amazed at such prodigious feats of memory. It's easy to forget today that for most of our history it was the spoken word, not the written one, on which people depended for the transmission of information.

We live in a very different world – one in which communication seems to be dominated by printed materials and the electronic media. But, surprisingly perhaps, spoken language remains the most important means of communication for most people.

2. Take a moment to think about the different types of speaking and/or listening situations you find yourself in on any given day. Make a simple chart like the one that follows and list as many situations as you can, trying to determine the chief purposes of each. The list has been started to get you thinking.

Situation	Purpose(s)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>chatting with friends</i></li> <li>• <i>asking a salesperson about a CD player you're interested in purchasing</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>to relax, share ideas, and have fun</i></li> <li>• <i>to gain information</i></li> </ul>

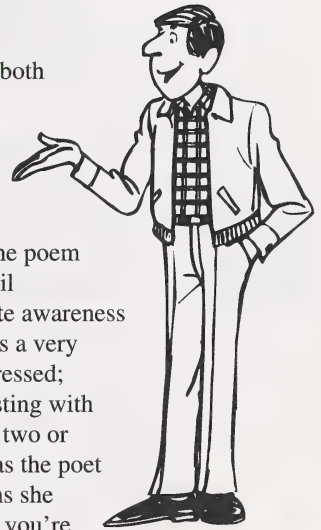
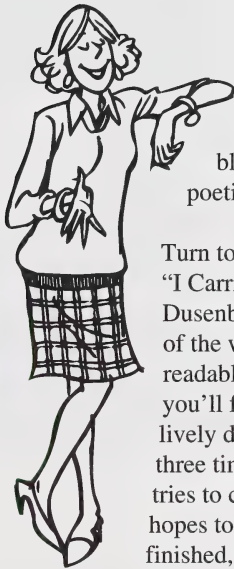
Compare your response with the one in the Appendix, Section 1: Activity 2.

Because oral communication skills are so important, this course will include a number of listening and/or speaking exercises aimed at improving your abilities in this area. You'll encounter them from time to time as you work through the course.

### The Beauty of Language

Most of our day-to-day use of language, both oral and written, is very prosaic and matter-of-fact. But you shouldn't let that blind you to the beauty of English and the poetic qualities of language all around you.

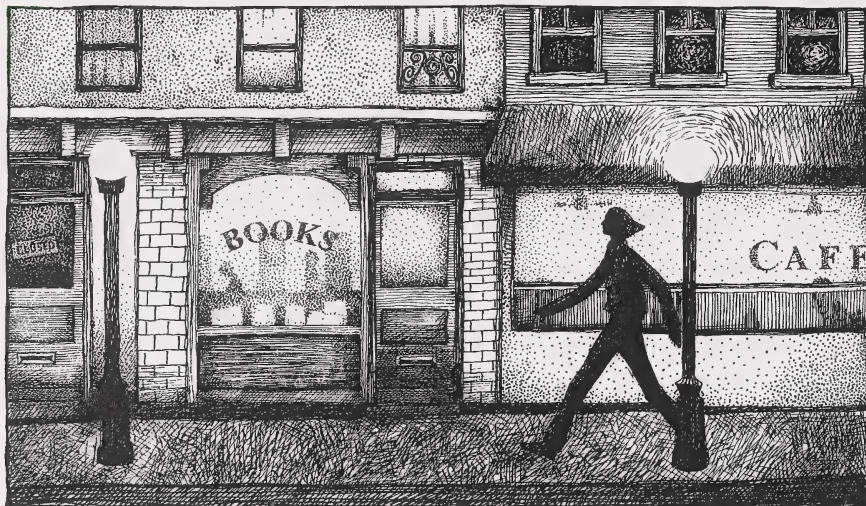
Turn to page 5 of *Literary Experiences* and read the poem "I Carried With Me Poems" by American poet Gail Dusenbery. This poem expresses the writer's acute awareness of the world of poets and poetry all around us. It's a very readable poem but, like all poetry, it's very compressed; you'll find it filled with colourful images and bursting with lively descriptions, so you should probably read it two or three times. Just sit back, open yourself to the ideas the poet tries to convey, the images she creates, the emotions she hopes to arouse in you, and enjoy the poem. When you're finished, respond to the questions that follow.



3. a. In a sentence or two explain what this poem says to you.
- b. Now try to describe how it makes you feel.
4. "I Carried With Me Poems" is full of colourful images – for example, "poems hanging from the clothesline." Quote **four** or **five** of the poem's images that you found particularly expressive. Study the quotations you've noted. What makes each one effective?
5. a. What do you think the poet means when she says "I carried with me poems"?



- b. What do you think she means when, at the end of the poem, she describes herself as “a tall, taciturn, fast-walking poets’ accomplice”?



6. Practise reading “I Carried With Me Poems” aloud, being as expressive as you can. Use changes in emphasis, pitch, volume, and speed to try to bring to life the images the poem conjures up and the feelings it evokes in you. When you’re ready, record a reading on audiotape; then play it back and see whether you think your oral interpretation does the poem justice. If you feel brave, play your recording for a friend or family member and get that person’s ideas.



**Compare your responses with those in the Appendix, Section 1: Activity 2.**

What did you think of Gail Dusenbery’s use of language in “I Carried With Me Poems”? Would you agree that she’s a person who clearly loves words and enjoys playing with them to create effects? As you progress through this course, perhaps you’ll become more sensitive to the world of language around you and learn to take a more conscious interest and pleasure in being a user of words and language. Perhaps you too will come to be a “poet’s accomplice.”

## Follow-up Activities



If you found the activities difficult, you should complete the Extra Help. If you understand the concepts clearly, you should complete the Enrichment.

### Extra Help

As mentioned in Activity 1, students sometimes balk at using a writer’s handbook. Because handbooks appear rather technical and complex, they can at first seem a little intimidating. If you find yourself hesitant to use your handbook, this Extra Help activity should be of some benefit; it’s designed to help you become more used to referring to your handbook when you write.

First, what handbook should you use? There are a number of good ones available. Following are a few possibilities (this is by no means a complete list):

- *The St. Martin's Handbook for Canadians*, written by Lunsford, Connors, and Segal and published by Nelson Canada\*
- *The Canadian Writer's Handbook*, written by Messenger and de Bruyn and published by Prentice-Hall Canada
- *McGraw-Hill Handbook of English*, written by H. Shaw and published by McGraw-Hill Ryerson
- *Harbrace College Handbook*, written by Hodges and Whitten and published by Harcourt Brace Jovanovich
- *A Canadian Writer's Reference*, written by D. Hacker and published by Nelson Canada\*



Writer's handbooks can vary considerably in the amount of information they contain and the way they're organized. For example, the two handbooks in the preceding list that are listed as basic resources by Alberta Education are very different. *The St. Martin's Handbook for Canadians* is a more complete reference containing a considerable amount of information, while *A Canadian Writer's Reference* is a much smaller book, designed principally as an easy-to-use reference that will quickly solve the problems most writer's encounter.

Once you've acquired a handbook, the next thing to do is to familiarize yourself with the way it's organized; and because handbooks are organized differently, you're going to have to do most of this on your own. Here are some steps to follow:

**Step 1:** Carefully read the instructions most handbooks have near the front that explain how to use the book. These instructions may be contained in a preface or, as in the case of *A Canadian Writer's Reference*, they may be found under a title like "How to Use this Book."

\* at the time of writing, authorized by Alberta Education as a basic resource for English 30



**Step 2:** Study the table of contents, noting the major and minor divisions of the book. All handbooks have a system of numbering (and lettering) the topics they discuss, and the appropriate number/letter code usually appears at the top or side of the page on which the discussion takes place. For instance, in *The St. Martin's Handbook for Canadians* dangling modifiers appear as topic c. of section 22 “Recognizing Misplaced, Disruptive, and Dangling Modifiers.” On page 389, where dangling modifiers are dealt with, you’ll find *mod/22c* appearing at the top (*mod* standing for *modifiers*). This handy reference tool makes locating information easier.

**Step 3:** Flip through the book making sure you understand this sort of code and generally familiarizing yourself with the organization. Notice whether or not your handbook contains such things as practice exercises, glossaries, and other useful features.

**Step 4:** Check the index at the back of the book. Often it’s the index that will get you to the topic you’re looking for most quickly. For instance, if you’re wondering about using commas between items in a series (for example “... hockey, skiing, figure skating, and bob sledding”) and you’re using the second edition of *The Canadian Writer's Handbook*, you can look up *comma* in the index, then run your eye down the list of comma topics until you come to the entry “with series, 194, 214-19.” Now you know the pages that are likely to contain the answer to your question.



Now for some practice. Use your handbook to answer the questions that follow.

1. Read these two sentences:

That’s a well explained idea.

Her ideas were well explained.

Should there be a hyphen between the words *well* and *explained* in either or both of these sentences? Why or why not?

2. Correctly capitalize the title of this magazine article:

happiness is living it up

3. Is the pronoun in the following sentence used correctly? If not, correct it and explain your reasons.

Andreas gave the money to Maria and I.

4. Punctuate this sentence correctly.

Danielle can't make it on Saturday however she'll be over Sunday morning.

5. Is the comma in the sentence that follows appropriate? Why or why not?

I ran for the bus, but I tripped and sprained my ankle.

6. Correct the apostrophe errors in the following sentence.

The sign over Phyllis's store lost both its Bs back in the 80s, but it's not something that worries Phyllis.

7. Following is a sentence occurring in a composition written by a student. Is her treatment of numbers correct? If not, correct it and explain your corrections.

325 people were invited, but only about two hundred showed up; I personally shook hands with 115 of them.

8. Which of the following dates is presented incorrectly?

56 B.C.  
104 A.D.

9. Rewrite the following sentence so as to correct the dangling modifier.

While stopping for a burger at a restaurant, my car was stolen.

10. Correct the wording in the following sentence.

After work Dad likes to lay down for a nap.

**Compare your responses with those in the Appendix,  
Section 1: Extra Help.**

The more you use your handbook, the more natural it will seem. You should eventually come to regard it as a writing tool as basic as paper, a pen, or a keyboard.





## Enrichment

Do **one** or **both** of the following.

1. In this section you spent some time thinking about a few of the things that make you a unique individual – someone who experiences life differently from everyone else. Some of the factors that make you uniquely who you are are the family and culture in which you've been brought up. Learning more about your own cultural and family background should give you a better understanding of who you are. It should also be fun.

To learn more about your family and its background, approach older family members and gather stories about your ancestors. Perhaps older relatives even have personal diaries – their own or ones that have been passed down to them – that they'd be willing to share.

When you've gathered enough information, write down some of the more interesting stories you've learned or create a fictional account of an incident you've heard or read about.

Perhaps you could do this from the point of view of the ancestor involved. Or, as an alternative, consider writing a letter to your own great-great-grandchild. You could begin by introducing yourself and go on to share one or two family stories with that descendant.



When you're finished, you'll probably want to save your accounts; after all, they should have a great deal of meaning for members of your family – as well as your descendants. Congratulate yourself that you've saved part of your family's history from oblivion.

2. In Activity 2 mention was made of two epic poems of ancient Greece, normally attributed to the poet Homer but generally considered to have been passed on orally for many years before they were written down. *The Iliad* tells the story of the Trojan War between a combined Greek army and the city of Troy. *The Odyssey* recounts the adventures of the Greek hero Odysseus (or Ulysses, as the Romans called him) as he returned home after the war.

Your library probably contains translations of both of these epic poems. If you can get hold of a copy of one or both, try reading them; you'll likely find their stories fascinating, and your appreciation of the power of the oral tradition in ancient peoples should be greatly enhanced.

## Conclusion

In Section 1 you've been given a thorough overview of the course you're just beginning. You've also been asked to start thinking about yourself as a user of language and to become more sensitive to the world of language around you. The next section will focus more particularly on writing – especially writing of the personal sort.

**There is no assignment for this section.**

## SECTION

## 2

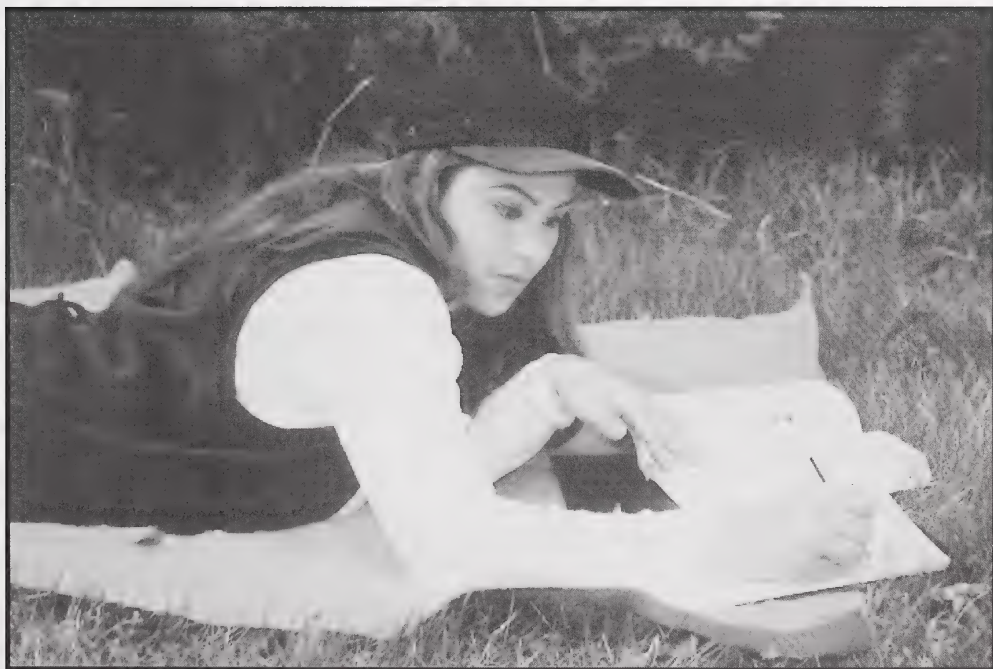
WRITING IN RESPONSE  
TO YOUR WORLD

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Do you enjoy writing, or do you always find it a chore? How do you go about completing a writing assignment? Where do you get your ideas? Do you put much effort into revising and reworking your first-draft writing?

In Section 2 you'll be looking at the business of generating ideas and getting them down on paper. The emphasis will be on more personal sorts of writing, but you'll be presented with a process that can be applied to writing of all types.

The assignment at the end of the section will give you a chance to demonstrate your skills in applying the writing process to a short personal composition.



## Activity 1: Writing Folders and the Personal Response

### Your Writing Folder

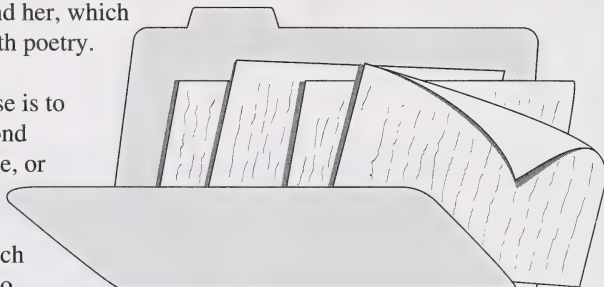


Think back for a moment to the selection you read in Section 1: “I Carried With Me Poems” by Gail Dusenbery. Like so much good poetry, this work is a very personal piece of writing; in it the writer responds to the world around her, which she perceives to be highly charged with poetry.

One objective of this English 30 course is to help you develop your ability to respond personally to things you read, hear, see, or otherwise experience. As you work through the course, you’ll

frequently encounter situations in which you’re asked for a personal response to

something – as when you were asked in Section 1 to describe what “I Carried With Me Poems” said to you and how it made you feel. Personal responses such as these are a chance for you to express directly and honestly how you’ve reacted to the literary selection, picture, or whatever it is you’ve experienced. When asked for a personal response, don’t be afraid of “making a mistake” or appearing silly. Learning to trust your own response and to express it clearly is an important part of becoming an effective communicator.



From now on you’ll normally be asked to keep your personal responses in your Writing Folder, which was mentioned briefly in Section 1. A Writing Folder is simply a file folder in which you can store pieces of your own writing. It’s not a place to keep polished pieces, nor is it a spot for saving critical essays or analyses of works of literature. Rather, it’s a place to which you alone have access and in which you’ll put your more personal pieces of writing – pieces probably representing a wide variety of styles, lengths, and degrees of polish. Some may be just a few ideas jotted down; others may be quite lengthy and nearly finished pieces of your best writing.



In each module of this course, you'll be asked to create a number of pieces of writing for your folder. Be sure you carefully date each one and indicate the module, section, and activity for which it's been written; then file your pieces in the order in which you write them. You might want to make a Table of Contents sheet to include at the front of your folder. Here's an example of how to set it up.

Module/Section/Activity			Title/Description	Form	Date
M1	S3	A2	"Movies I Enjoy"	Personal essay	Sept. 10, 199_

At the end of most sections of the modules that make up your English 30 course you'll be asked to complete and hand in assignments that will be graded. Sometimes part of these assignments will involve selecting something you've written and saved in your Writing Folder and probably reworking it, or polishing it, and handing it in. You'll be able to choose something you've done that you'd like your teacher to read, respond to, and grade. This procedure should help ensure that for the most part it's your best writing for which you'll be receiving credit and that it's you who decides which pieces your teacher will see.



*Ms. Jensen, I like to do my writing on our computer. Is it all right if I keep an electronic Writing Folder? Believe me, I can keep things much better organized that way.*



*That's a good question, Katrin. If you have regular access to a computer, you certainly have the option of keeping an electronic Writing Folder. Just be sure to keep backup disks and/or hard copies of your work; at the end of the course you'll be asked to go through what you've written and create a portfolio of your best pieces.*

Your Writing Folder is a place where you don't have to worry overmuch about such things as grammar, spelling, and punctuation; rather it's things like originality, perceptivity, and style that count here. What follows is a typical scale for the evaluating of folder writing (marks are indicated in parentheses on the left).



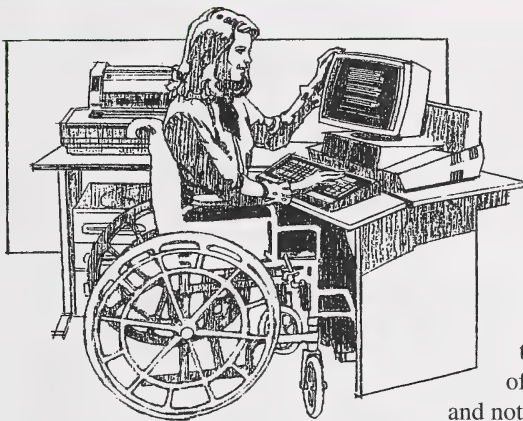
### Scale for Evaluation of Expressive Language

- (5) The writer's thoughts are perceptive and original. The content is detailed thoroughly or philosophically. The writer's purpose is self-evident with a clear and consistent voice throughout. The organizing principle is well selected and makes the ideas easy to follow. The writer has selected language that reflects thoughtful creativity.
- (4) The writer's thoughts are perceptive but not particularly original. The content is clearly detailed. The writer's purpose is clear with a consistent voice throughout. The organizing principle is easy to follow. The writer's selection of language is appropriate.
- (3) The writer's thoughts lack originality, and the content needs to be more completely developed. The writer's purpose is not always clear; and the voice, while present, is not always easy to follow. The writer's selection of language is appropriate but often vague or general.
- (2) The writer's thoughts are inconsistent or unconnected, but appear generally related to the purpose. However, the writer doesn't really understand the needs of the audience so that the content is inappropriate or very disconnected. The writer's sense of purpose is not clear throughout, and the selection of language is often flawed or inappropriate.
- (1) The writer's thoughts are not at all clear. The selection of detail is confusing and conflicting. The writer seems to have little understanding of the task, and the language selection is inaccurate and inappropriate.
- (OT) Off Topic. The response itself has little or no connection to the purpose of the assignment.
- (NS) Insufficient. The response is too short to be marked.

When you're asked to submit a piece of folder writing as part of one of your assignments for this course, however, you'll normally be asked to revise, edit, and polish it prior to submission – or even to use your piece of writing as a source of ideas for a brand new composition. In other words, you'll also be graded on the correctness and “polish” of your submitted pieces.

*Expressive writing: informal, often experimental, writing that explores, reflects on, and expresses ideas and feelings*

The type of personal writing that you'll be putting into your folder is sometimes called **expressive writing**, for it allows writers to express their feelings and ideas honestly and freely without worrying a great deal about such things as “correctness” or critical analysis. *Reflective* and *exploratory* writing are other terms sometimes used to refer to much the same sort of thing; for when engaged in this sort of writing, people can reflect on themselves and their experiences while exploring new ways of expressing themselves.



In essence, expressive writing lies at the heart of the creative writing process; for it's in doing this sort of thing that writers explore new concepts, reflect on their world, and generate new ideas. Often serious writers will engage in expressive writing just to keep in practice, and it's amazing how frequently just putting pen to paper (or fingers to keyboard) can trigger new thoughts and create different ways of perceiving things. These new ideas can, in turn, often serve as "seeds" for future pieces of writing. Writing folders, diaries, journals, and notebooks all provide writers with sources of ideas as well as places in which to "try out" different ways of writing and thinking.

Here's your first Writing Folder exercise.

### WRITING FOLDER

In your Writing Folder respond to the following:

Have you ever discovered how just sitting and writing about a topic can trigger ideas and generate new ways of looking at things? Try this experiment. From the topics that follow, pick one and, without thinking about it too much beforehand, just start writing:

- your feelings about school or some aspect of it
- what you like and/or dislike about being in your late teens (or whatever age group you're in)
- what you most fear or look forward to about being on your own
- any other similar topic that interests you

Write whatever comes into your head about your chosen topic without judging your ideas as good or bad, sensible or silly. Do this for five to ten minutes; then stop.

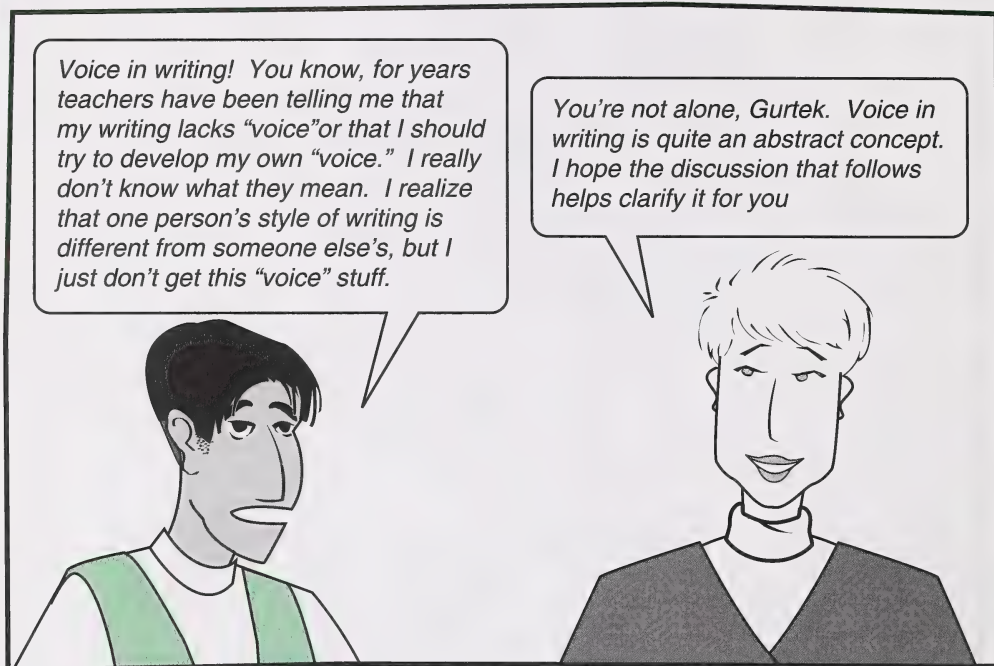
You'll probably end up thinking you should toss out what you've written rather than save this exercise for your Writing Folder; it'll likely be rambling and not representative of your best work. But you should find that you've generated all sorts of ideas about your topic that you can now use for a more polished piece of writing.

Certainly not all your Writing Folder work should be done this way, but the point is that your folder gives you an opportunity to experiment and explore. One of the aspects of writing that you should be exploring – and developing – when doing folder work is your own **voice**.

*Voice: in writing, the personal and recognizable style of a writer*



## Voice in Writing



When teachers speak of developing your own “voice” when you write, students sometimes have trouble understanding just what they mean. Put simply, a piece of writing has voice if readers get the feeling that they’re truly in touch with the person who wrote it. A composition that sounds contrived, artificial, or just “churned out” because it was assigned lacks voice.

By contrast, compositions have voice if they sound genuine, if they give the impression that the writers really meant what they were saying, and if they create the feeling that they were written by unique individuals who enjoyed writing and expressed themselves honestly – whether they were feeling angry, jubilant, depressed, or enthusiastic at the time.

Since everyone is unique as a user of language, everyone has a unique voice. As you do your Writing Folder exercises throughout the course, work at finding and developing yours.

You’ll be looking at voice in more detail in Module 3.

## Your Writing Portfolio

By the end of this course you should have quite a hefty folder – that is, if you do your Writing Folder exercises conscientiously: everything from short ideas that need expanding to polished pieces of writing. In Module 8, the final module, you’ll be asked to go through your folder pieces and collect the ones that you think best represent your ability as a writer. These pieces will comprise your writing portfolio – a portfolio you’ll be asked to submit for a grading and in which you should take a good deal of pride.

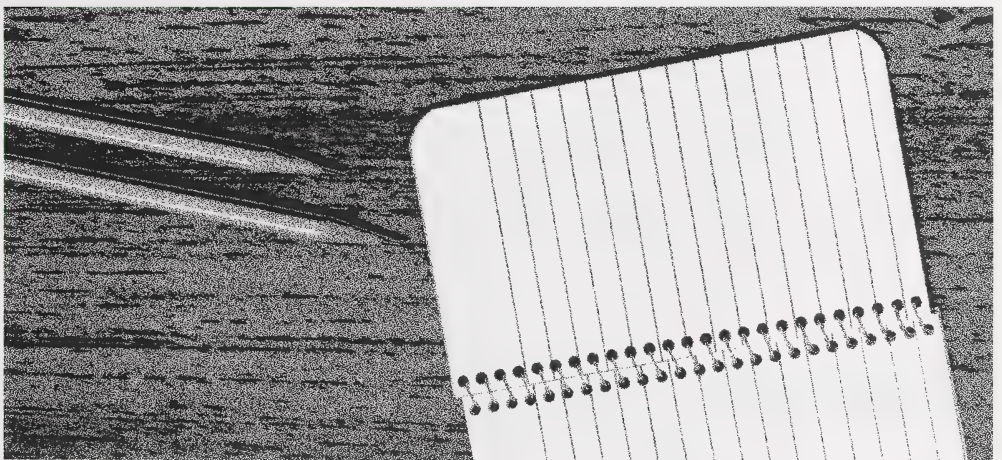
Here's another Writing Folder exercise. It may seem a bit difficult to get into at first, but remember that your folder is a device meant to help you develop your own voice and say things you want to say. Feel free to experiment; it's very important that you enjoy the process of creating a piece of writing.

### WRITING FOLDER

In your Writing Folder respond to the following ideas.

Reread "I Carried With Me Poems." Note how the poet "carried" poems around with her as she walked through the city. Now think about yourself; do you carry around with you snatches of songs, bits of remembered stories, images from books you've read, interesting quotations you've heard? What bits of literature and ideas expressed in language do you carry around with you? Why do you carry them?

### Folders, Notebooks, and Diaries



For some writers (perhaps you'll be one of them) a folder will become a lifelong companion – a place to hoard nuggets of language to which they can refer over and over. Most professional writers keep notebooks, journals, diaries, and/or folders in which they record and explore all sorts of ideas that interest them and which they think may someday be useful for a story. The selection you're about to read describes how one writer feels about her own notebook.

Turn to page 8 of *Literary Experiences* and read the essay "On Keeping a Notebook" by American writer Joan Didion. You may find it a touch confusing at first, but that won't last long.

When you've read the essay, answer the questions that follow.

1. Joan Didion's notebook isn't quite the same as the Writing Folder you're keeping, though both are useful tools for the would-be writer. How do the two differ?





2. Having read Didion's essay, tell in your own words why she keeps a notebook.
3. Are you a budding writer? Do you, like Joan Didion, feel compelled to record interesting tidbits you hear and see, along with thoughts, feelings, or experiences you may have? If so, what sorts of things do you record? What benefit do you think you derive from doing this?
4. Imagine that you keep a notebook like the one Joan Didion describes. What are a few experiences you've had in the last few weeks that you might record in it?
5. How do you usually go about getting ideas for creative writing tasks? What techniques other than keeping a notebook or folder can generate ideas for this sort of writing?

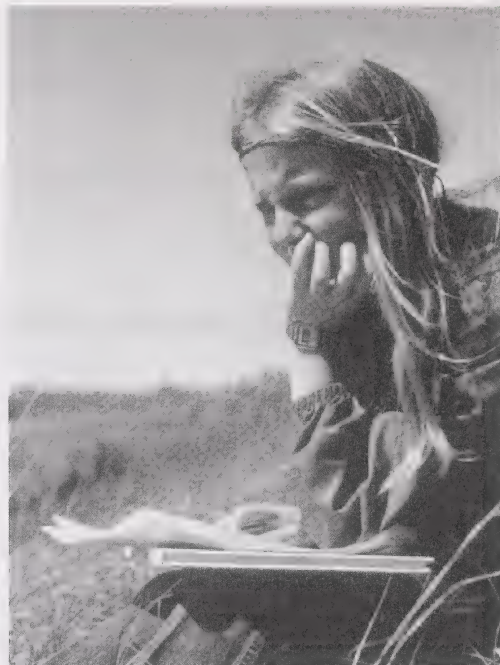


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Compare your responses with those in the Appendix, Section 2: Activity 1.

Expressive writing is by its very nature experimental – and, as a result, it's often rather haphazard and unfinished. A great deal more is needed to produce a polished piece of writing, and that's the process you'll be looking at in the next activity.

## Activity 2: The Writing Process



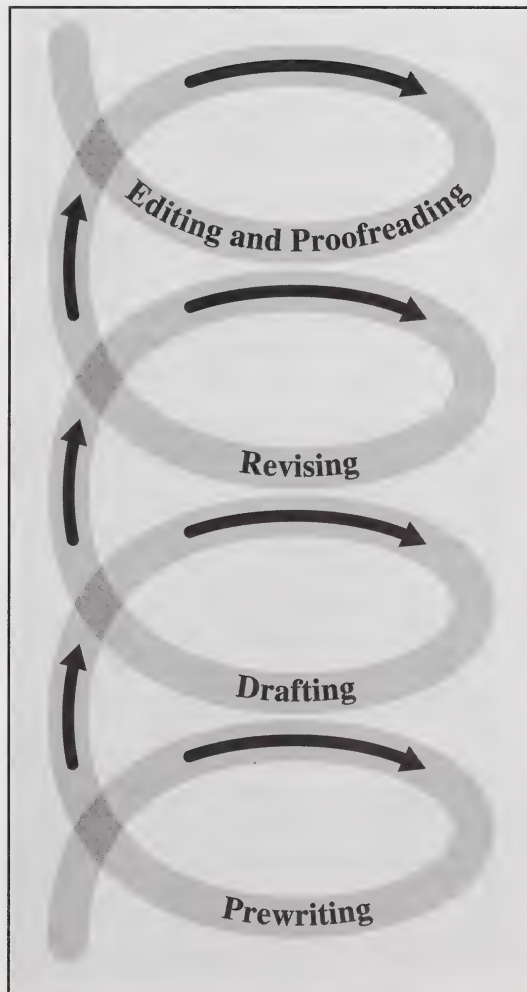
Writing is a rather complex process – and one that's different for each individual. Have you ever stopped to think about how you go about creating a written composition? Consider the following questions to get an idea of yourself as a writer:

- Where do you like to write – in your room? in front of the television? in the library?
- Do you like to write in a quiet environment, or do you prefer music or background noise?
- Do you prefer writing with pen and ink or a keyboard?
- Do you like to write alone or as part of a group?
- How do you usually go about getting ideas for what you write?
- What steps do you go through when you write?
- How much time do you devote to revising, editing, and otherwise polishing your work?
- What do you like most about writing? What do you find most difficult?

Knowing yourself as a writer is important in part because it enables you to spot your weak areas and try to improve them. While it's true that no two people go about writing in just the same way, that doesn't mean that you can't learn from examining the processes used by good writers and adapting them to your own style. What follows is a process that all writers should use; as you'll see, it leaves a good deal of scope for individual adaptations. If you're already familiar with this process, simply regard this as a quick review.

## The Writing Spiral

The writing process isn't a linear (straight-line) one, but one that's recursive (it doubles back and then goes ahead). As you write, you'll find yourself heading off in one direction, then circling back, perhaps branching out, and then moving on. The whole process might be represented as in the spiralling diagram that follows. Study the diagram carefully. Then read the explanations that come after it. Note that the process as diagrammed spirals upward, so the explanation begins by discussing the bottom stage first.



**Editing:** in writing, the process of correcting grammatical problems and surface errors in things like capitalization, spelling, and punctuation

**Revising:** in writing, the process of revisiting and reworking an earlier draft

**Drafting:** writing a first version

**Prewriting:** generating ideas and planning for writing through such processes as discussing, thinking, brainstorming, clustering, or making lists



*Brainstorming:*  
generating as  
many ideas as  
possible without  
restraint or  
criticism

*Webbing:*  
connecting ideas  
related to a  
single idea in  
clusters around  
it (also called  
clustering or  
concept  
mapping)

**Prewriting:** This is the stage of planning and generating ideas – by means of such techniques as discussing, thinking, **brainstorming**, **webbing**, doing exploratory writing, and thinking back to things you’ve read and experiences you’ve had in the past.

**Drafting:** At this stage you take your ideas from prewriting and write a rough draft. Don’t be surprised if what you write triggers new ideas that stimulate further writing.

At this point you shouldn’t be too concerned about spelling, grammar, and punctuation; you just want to get your thoughts down on paper.

Do you find that you don’t have much to say about your topic? Are you having trouble organizing your ideas? Do you find that you aren’t comfortable with the topic or approach you’ve taken? If so, you may want to go back and do some more prewriting.

If you’re generally pleased with what you’ve written so far, go on to the next stage.

**Revising:** Here you go back, rework, and refine what you’ve written, making the connections among ideas clearer, improving wording, adding important details, and deleting irrelevant ones. It’s a chance to rethink and reorganize.

If you’re unhappy with any part of what you’ve written, feel free to return to the writing stage or even the prewriting stage. Once you’re satisfied with your revisions, you can go to the editing and proofreading stage.

**Editing and Proofreading:** Here you concentrate on the finishing touches – things like spelling, grammar, and punctuation. A writer’s handbook and a dictionary are tools you’ll use at this stage. The keen eye of a trusted friend can also help you find things you miss.

You may spot other things that need more attention. Who says you can’t go back to the revising stage? or the writing stage? or even the prewriting stage? It’s your writing, so you decide what needs to be done and when.

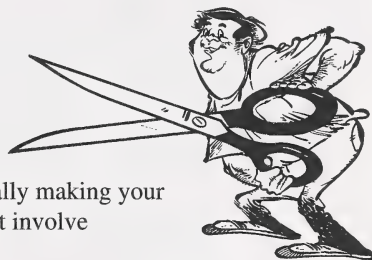


As you can see, this writing process includes a great deal of going back and reworking what you've already done so as constantly to improve it. This revisiting what you've already written (principally at the revision and editing stages) so as to improve it is something that many students try to avoid – or that they have difficulty doing. For that reason, you'll now spend some time looking at the last two stages of the writing process in some detail. (If you have problems with the prewriting or drafting stages, you'll find fuller explanations in the Extra Help.)

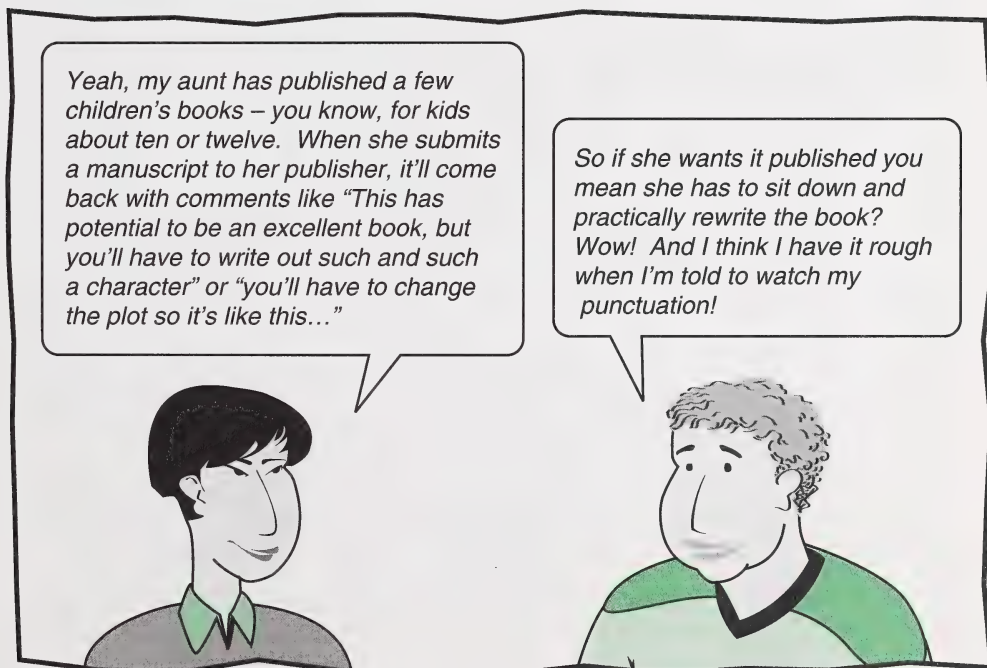
## Revision



Revision is the stage of the writing process in which you take your rough draft and work it into a more finished, polished piece of writing. It involves considering your ideas all over again, changing words, adding words, placing ideas in a different, more effective order, and generally making your work communicate your thoughts more accurately. It might involve extensive rewriting.

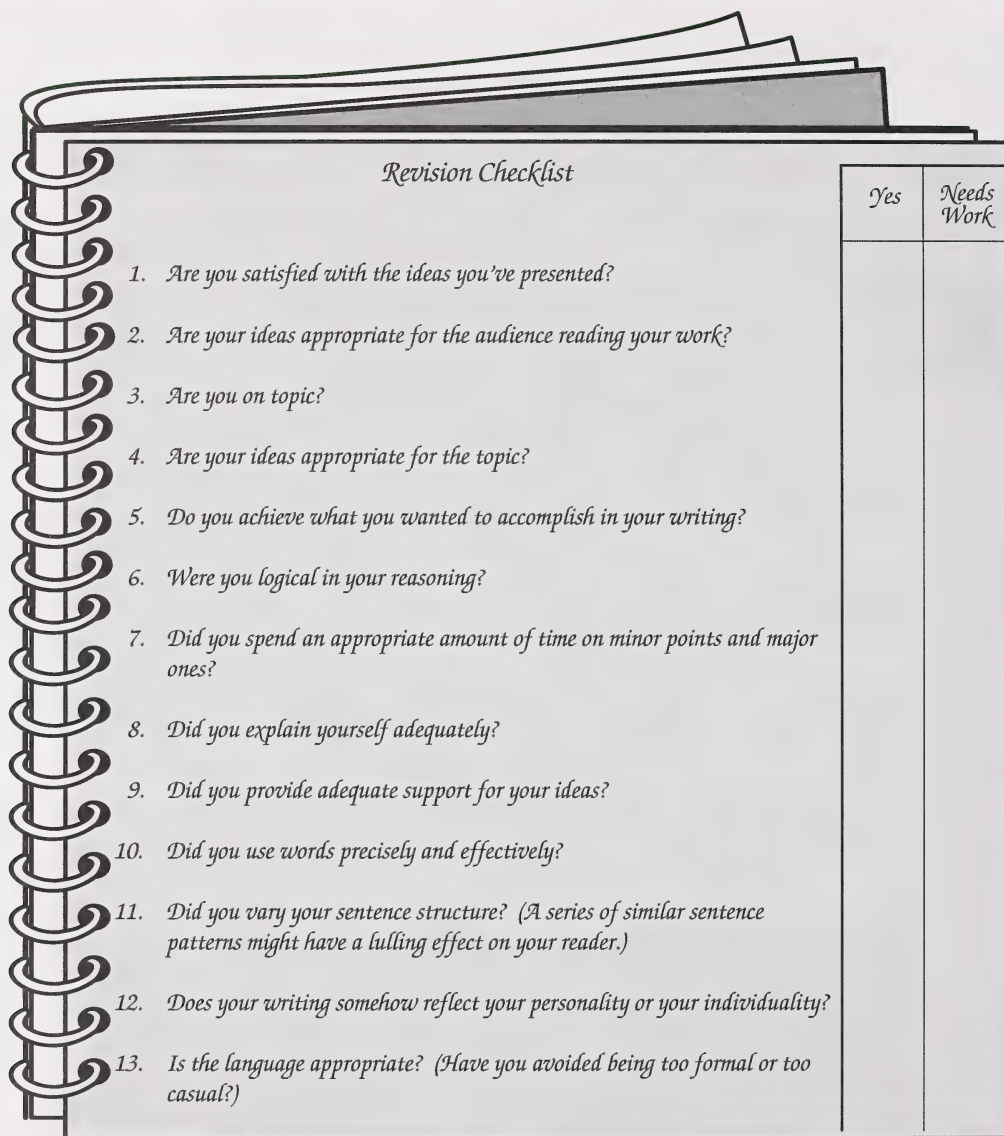


Don't be afraid of this stage of the writing process; it's vitally important. If time allows, it's often a good idea to put away a rough draft for a few days before revising it. When you look at it with fresh eyes, it can be surprising the number of shortcomings you notice that you just couldn't see before. Most serious writers rewrite their early drafts extensively; sometimes, in fact, authors end up rewriting entire novels – or large sections of them – at this stage. By comparison, revising a short high school composition doesn't seem such a demanding task.



The following Revision Checklist is by no means complete, but it might prove useful in helping you get used to the revision process. Feel free to add your own ideas to the checklist. (A more complete look at revision will be presented in Module 3.)





<i>Revision Checklist</i>		<i>Yes</i>	<i>Needs Work</i>
1.	<i>Are you satisfied with the ideas you've presented?</i>		
2.	<i>Are your ideas appropriate for the audience reading your work?</i>		
3.	<i>Are you on topic?</i>		
4.	<i>Are your ideas appropriate for the topic?</i>		
5.	<i>Do you achieve what you wanted to accomplish in your writing?</i>		
6.	<i>Were you logical in your reasoning?</i>		
7.	<i>Did you spend an appropriate amount of time on minor points and major ones?</i>		
8.	<i>Did you explain yourself adequately?</i>		
9.	<i>Did you provide adequate support for your ideas?</i>		
10.	<i>Did you use words precisely and effectively?</i>		
11.	<i>Did you vary your sentence structure? (A series of similar sentence patterns might have a lulling effect on your reader.)</i>		
12.	<i>Does your writing somehow reflect your personality or your individuality?</i>		
13.	<i>Is the language appropriate? (Have you avoided being too formal or too casual?)</i>		

A final note: At the revision stage don't worry about keeping your work neat and clean. In fact, if a page is covered in comments, erasures, arrows, and added notes, it's a good indication that it's been well revised and reworked.

1. Select one of your Writing Folder responses from this section or one of your more personal responses from Section 1 (for example, the first question in either Activity 1 or Activity 2). Assume that you have to work up this response so that it reflects your writing ability at its best. Using your Revision Checklist and any other criteria you think appropriate, revise your response to improve it as much as you can.

Compare your response with the one in the Appendix, Section 2: Activity 2.

## Editing and Proofreading



By the time you get to the editing stage, your composition should be pretty well the way you want it to be. It's now that you can go through it looking for problems in areas like grammar, spelling, and punctuation. At this stage your dictionary and writer's handbook will prove valuable.



- It's always a shame when students lose marks on otherwise well-written compositions simply because their writing contains a number of "mechanical" errors (errors in spelling, grammar, and punctuation), yet this happens all the time. Here's an excerpt from a short narrative composition; it needs some solid editing to remove its mechanical errors. Test your editing skills by rewriting the piece with the mistakes corrected. Use your handbook whenever necessary. (Ordinarily you wouldn't correct grammar mistakes in direct quotations, but in this case make an exception.)

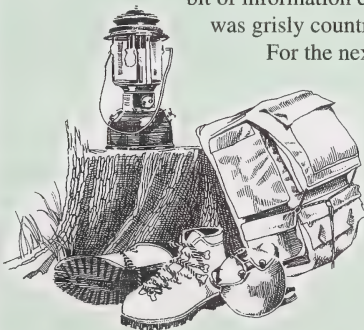
We started on our hike at about eight A.M.. We were travelling light, we each had a canteen full of water, a couple sandwiches for lunch, chocolate bar's for that old sugar fix and emergency supplies like matches and bandages.

At first everything was going pretty good. The sun was up but, it was nice and cool and quite in the mountains. Our spirits were high but that was soon to change.

The first thing that happens is that Louie trips on a rock and aggravates his old knee injury. How are you doing I asked. Not to good Louie replys, I feel like their's a knife stuck in my knee. But being that good old Louie can always be relied on, he naturally insisted on going on even though he's now limping real bad. Everybody has to do their part he says but, I wish I wouldn't of made contact with that rock. The guy that put it their should of been shot. Well keep your eyes open, said Trever. There's lots more rocks around.

The next calamity to strike is Anna's bear. Personally, I'm sure their was no bear anywheres around but, Anna swore she heard – and smelt – one. As you can imagine, this bit of information effected us all, we all got real scared. Because this was grisly country. Now not one of us were enjoying the hike much.

For the next hour, or so, everyone keeps looking over their shoulders every few steps but, noone seen a bear.



By the time we got to the end of the trail. We were all exhausted. Louie was limping pretty bad; his knee was swollen, and I didn't like it's colour. Each of us threw down there stuff and we had taken a solem oath not to go near the mountains for at least a year. All accept good old Louie. He was game to do it all again as soon as his knee was healed.

Compare your response with the one in the Appendix, Section 2: Activity 2.



You probably corrected almost all the errors in the preceding excerpt without much trouble, but if you discovered that there are areas in which you're weak, remember to give them extra attention when you edit your own work. If you have problems with commas, run-on sentences, and sentence fragments, one good trick is to read your work aloud – pausing whenever your punctuation dictates – and listen to yourself as you read. Many students find this trick extremely helpful in spotting this sort of error.

When you've corrected all the mechanical errors you can find in your work, it's time to rewrite your finished copy, remembering that writing you intend to share with others and on which you'll be graded should be as free from error as possible. Finally, when you've completed your finished copy, don't forget to proofread it just to make sure that you've put in all your corrections and changes and that you haven't made new mistakes in recopying. Once your proofreading is done, your composition is finished; it should be something in which you can take a good deal of pride.



It's important to correct the mechanical problems at the editing stage.

### Activity 3: The Personal Essay – A First Look



In earlier activities you've been asked to think about the importance of language in your life, and you looked briefly at the writing of personal responses to things you read, see, hear, and experience. Expressing thoughts, feelings, and values is something writers frequently do.



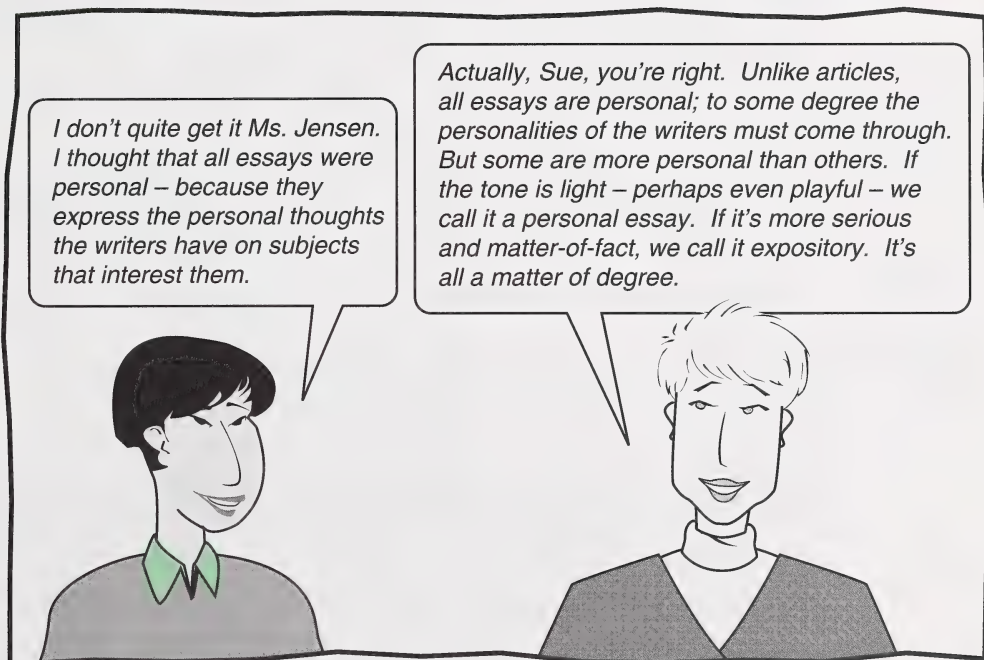
The selection you're about to read was written by someone with whom you may well be familiar – the Canadian writer Margaret Laurence. If you are familiar with Margaret Laurence, you probably know that she's best known for her works of fiction – novels and short stories. The selection you'll be reading, however, is nonfiction; in it Laurence talks about the process of creative writing and some of the forces that have influenced her work. You'll find she makes some interesting observations about how people's pasts affect their later lives.

Turn now to page 66 of *Literary Experiences* and read "A Place to Stand On" by Margaret Laurence. Think carefully about the ideas the writer puts forward.



*Essay: a short piece of nonfictional writing in which an author presents a viewpoint on a subject in a personal way*

“A Place to Stand On” is an **essay**. In essays writers present their ideas about matters that interest them or that they consider important. Essays are often divided into two major groupings: personal essays and expository essays. This isn’t a cut-and-dried distinction, but rather a continuum or scale. Essays that tend to be factual, objective, and explanatory fall toward the expository end of the scale, whereas more imaginative, subjective, and reflective essays fall toward the personal end.



1. Where would you put “A Place to Stand On” on the personal-expository continuum? Explain your reasons.

Writers, you’ve no doubt been told in past English courses, should always write with a purpose in mind. Five common purposes for writing an essay are

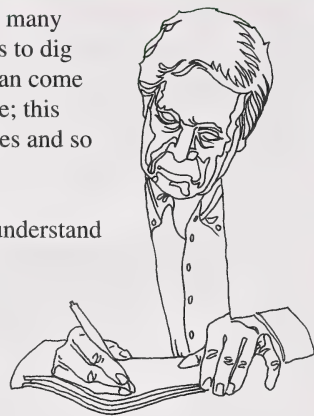
- to inform
  - to describe
  - to reflect
  - to persuade
  - to entertain
2. a. What would you say Margaret Laurence’s chief purpose(s) was in writing “A Place to Stand On”?
  - b. Do you think she achieved her purpose(s)? Explain why or why not.



*Thesis: a writer's main argument; the central point a writer wants to make*

The main idea, or **thesis**, of “A Place to Stand On” is that one way many writers have of learning about themselves, and thereby maturing, is to dig into their own pasts and to write about them. In this way writers can come to a better understanding of the forces that made them who they are; this understanding, in turn, helps them free themselves from those forces and so move beyond them.

3. This thesis is a rather abstract concept – difficult, perhaps, to understand as Laurence first presents it. Point out three or four concrete examples from Laurence’s own life that she uses to make her ideas more comprehensible and meaningful.
4. In “A Place to Stand On” Margaret Laurence discusses how important the place where a person grows up can be in determining how that person sees the world as an adult. While Laurence clearly has mixed feelings about her home town, she admits that it’s coloured her work as a writer tremendously.



How do you feel about your home town? What do you like about it? What do you dislike? Will you somehow carry it about with you all your life as Margaret Laurence suggests? In your response try to use concrete examples the way Laurence did.

Compare your responses with those in the Appendix, Section 2: Activity 3.

### WRITING FOLDER

In your Writing Folder respond to **one** of the following ideas.

1. Do you have a place to stand on? If so, what is it and why is it your place to be? If not, why do you think you’re different from Margaret Laurence in this way?
2. Imagine that you’ve left your home town and returned to it years later. How do you see it now? How do your feelings about it differ from the feelings you once had? Do you find, like Margaret Laurence, that despite everything you’re somehow rooted in the place where you grew up?



You’ll be studying essays in much greater depth in Module 3. Your assignment for this section will, however, be to create a short personal essay of your own – so be prepared.

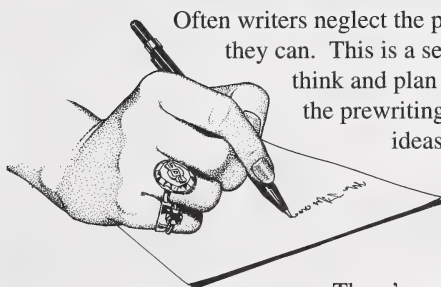
## Follow-up Activities

If you found the activities difficult, you should complete the Extra Help. If you understand the concepts clearly, you should complete the Enrichment.

### Extra Help

In the discussion of the writing process in Activity 2, the emphasis was laid on the revising and editing stages because these are the stages most often neglected by students. If you have trouble at the prewriting and/or drafting stages, however, what follows should give you some help.

### Prewriting



Often writers neglect the prewriting stage – or they spend as little time on it as they can. This is a serious mistake because it's at this point that you can think and plan and get ideas for what you'll be writing. Actually, the prewriting stage consists of three distinct steps: generating ideas, focusing your thoughts, and planning your work.

This discussion will focus principally on the first – and perhaps most difficult step: generating ideas.

There's room for a wide variety of individual techniques for generating ideas at the prewriting stage. Here are short descriptions of a few of the most popular ones.

### Brainstorming

When you brainstorm, you just jot down any ideas that occur to you about a subject, no matter how unusual or “off the wall” they may seem. Then, later, you can look over what you've come up with and use the ideas that, upon more thoughtful consideration, seem workable. Technically, brainstorming is a method of generating ideas in a group situation, where one person's suggestion will trigger an idea in someone else – until a whole chalkboard may be filled up with a surprising number of creative suggestions. However, the technique can be used by one person working alone if that person is prepared to jot down whatever thoughts occur without evaluating them until later. You may well be surprised at the creative, original ideas you can come up with in a brainstorming session when you're not afraid to put down any idea, no matter how farfetched it seems at first.

### Exploratory Writing

Exploratory writing is simply writing done to see where it goes. This sort of writing, done as a preliminary exercise intended to generate ideas and to “get the creative juices flowing” can often be an invaluable exercise in preparing to write a composition or personal essay.

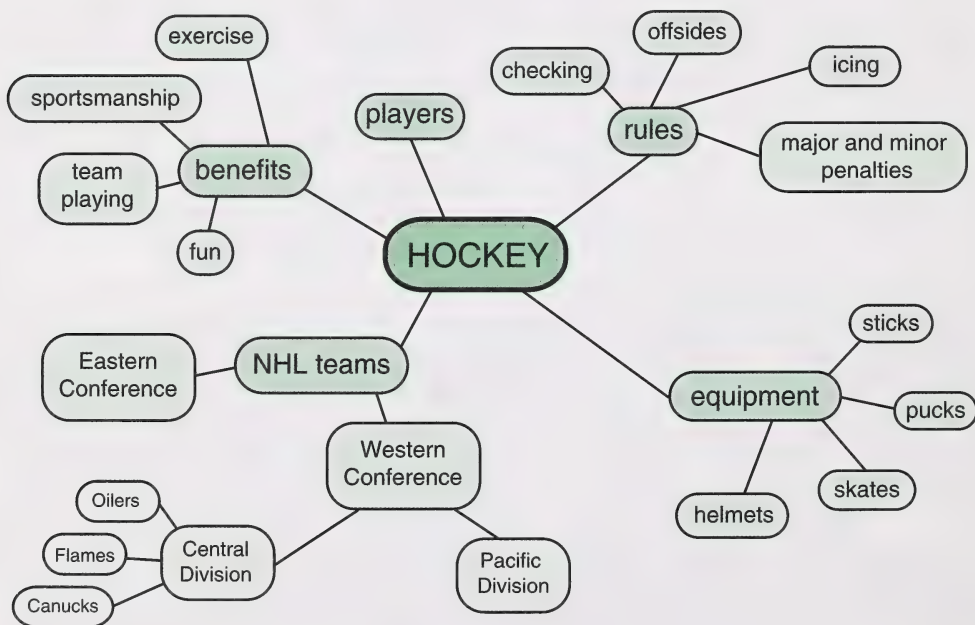


## Freewriting

Freewriting is something like exploratory writing, but here you let yourself go even more. The trick is to keep pen on paper for five or ten minutes and to write nonstop during that time; your first Writing Folder response was something like a freewriting exercise, though there you weren't expected to write nonstop. When engaged in real freewriting, if you run out of ideas before the time's up, you just keep repeating the last word you've written over and over until the thoughts start to flow again. You'll be surprised by the ideas you can generate by freewriting.

## Webbing

You're probably used to making webs (sometimes called *clusters* or *concept maps*). If you are, you should know how well this technique can work for generating ideas. Just take the main concept you'll be working with, put it in a circle in the middle of a blank page, and then around it place any related ideas that occur to you, circling each and connecting it to the main idea with a line. In more complex webs, you'll get a network of main ideas, secondary ideas, and so on, as the following diagram illustrates.



A big advantage of webbing as a prewriting activity is that it not only helps generate ideas, but it also organizes them as you go. Webbing can help you tremendously at the drafting stage; things just seem to fall into place because you've already worked out their relationships.

## Group Discussions

If you're lucky enough to be able to talk over ideas for a writing assignment with a group of fellow students, you'll likely find that other people's thoughts often trigger new ideas of your own – and presto! you're on your way.

### Referring to Writing Folders, Journals, and Notebooks

If you keep a folder of your writing (as you should now be doing) or some other form of notebook in which you jot down your thoughts, flipping through it can often provide ideas for new pieces of writing. Your earlier observations and compositions can serve as jumping-off points for new pieces of writing.

1. Pick any topic that interests you. Try brainstorming and/or webbing to get ideas for a writing assignment on that topic. See which one works best for you.
2. Now pick another topic and try freewriting for five minutes. Remember to keep writing no matter what. When you've finished, see how many "seed" ideas you've generated for a composition on the subject.

### Compare your responses with those in the Appendix, Section 2: Extra Help.

These aren't all the prewriting techniques available to you, but there are enough here to give you a start. Experiment with the methods presented here and any others you may encounter or dream up. See which ones work best for you.

### Drafting

Drafting is the process of actually producing the first version of a piece of writing. You'll be doing a good deal of work on this stage later in the course, notably in Module 3. Bear in mind that at this stage of the writing process you're far from creating a final copy of the piece you're developing. As you write your first draft, you might still be finding out how you feel about a particular subject. You might even find, after reading your first draft, that you now don't entirely agree with what you've just said.

What you're left with when you're finished the drafting stage is a raw product that requires a good deal more work before it's ready to be shared with others or submitted for a grading.

Here are three simple hints to help you at the drafting stage.

- Don't worry about spelling, grammar, and punctuation here; leave that for the editing stage. It's a good idea, though, to highlight or circle words and constructions of which you're unsure.
- Leave blanks when you can't think of the right word and come back to them at the revision stage.

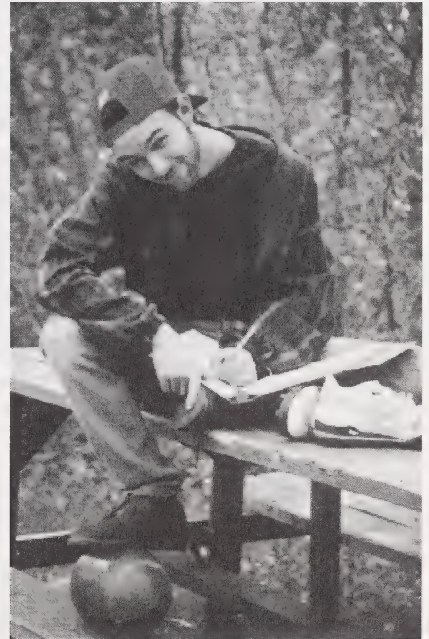


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- Double-space your work so you can add new ideas later. It's also a good idea to write on only one side of each piece of paper in case you end up cutting and pasting later (of course, if you're lucky enough to have access to a computer for your writing, many of these problems won't arise).

You'll get a chance to practise your prewriting and drafting skills – along with your revising and editing skills – in your Section 2 Assignment.

## Enrichment

Do **one** or **both** of the following.

1. In her essay "On Keeping a Notebook," Joan Didion describes why she, as a writer, keeps a notebook in which she records such things as snatches of overheard conversations and sights, sounds, and events that somehow intrigue her. Try keeping a notebook of your own for several weeks; it should serve both to heighten your awareness and interest in things going on around you and to provide ideas for creative writing assignments. Who knows? It may become a lifelong habit.
2. Margaret Laurence, in her essay "A Place to Stand On," describes how growing up in a town in Manitoba affected her writing and the ways in which she saw the world as an adult.

If you've never read any of Laurence's fiction, you might enjoy sampling some and seeing how she describes life in small-town Manitoba in the 1930s and 1940s. A good place to start would be with a short story from her collection *A Bird in the House*.

If you're more ambitious, try one of these novels:

- *The Stone Angel*
- *The Fire-Dwellers*
- *A Jest of God*
- *The Diviners*

*The Diviners*, Laurence's most ambitious work, is probably the novel in which she most clearly comes to grip with her own past.

## Conclusion

In Section 2 you've looked at expressive writing and you've begun to keep a Writing Folder of your own personal responses. You've also had a short review of the writing process, with a more thorough study of the stages of revision and editing and proofreading. Finally, you've looked briefly at the personal essay.

In Section 3, the last section of the module, you'll start thinking about the role fictional writing plays in our lives. This study will serve as a lead-in to Module 2: "Short Stories."

### ASSIGNMENT

In your Assignment Booklet complete the assignment for this section.

## SECTION

## 3

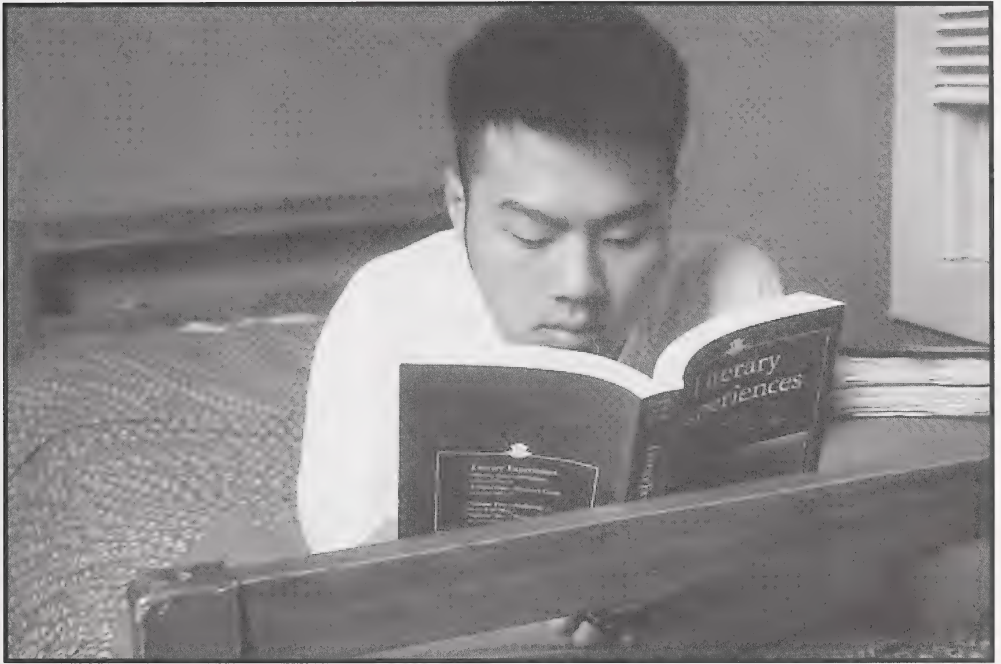
EXPERIENCING  
LITERATURE

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Do you enjoy putting your feet up and sinking into a good book? Do you like to watch live plays or good, thought-provoking films? Do you take pleasure in listening to the beautiful, captivating lyrics of well-written songs? If so, you know something about the ways in which literature can enrich people's lives.

This final section of Module 1 will introduce you to the world of literature. You'll see how reading literature differs from reading for information; then you'll look briefly at the origins of fictional stories in the form of simple narratives. Finally, you'll look at how such narratives developed into the literary form known as the *short story* – which will be the focus for Module 2.

Your Section 3 Assignment will give you the opportunity to demonstrate your understanding of the concepts that you'll be examining in this section by interpreting and responding personally to both a poem and a short story as well as by expressing your own ideas on a topic in a short personal essay.



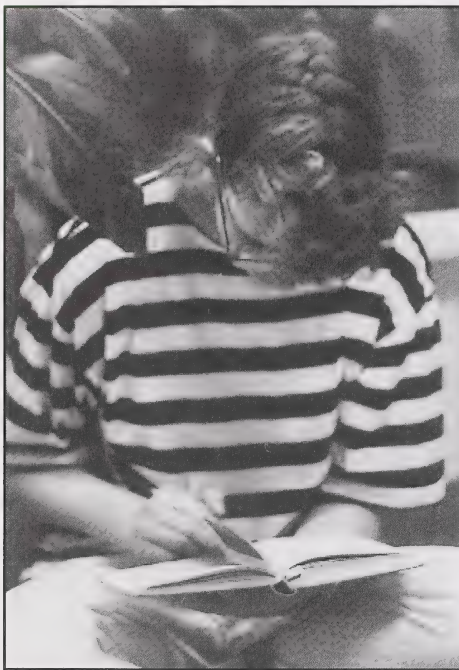
## Activity 1: Reading – For Information or for the Experience?

### Purpose in Reading



*Aesthetic:  
relating to  
beauty rather  
than practicality*

As every competent reader is fully aware, people read for a variety of purposes. Sometimes it's to learn new information, sometimes it's to locate a specific fact, sometimes it's to survey or preview something to be read in greater depth later, and sometimes it's simply for the experience – for the sheer enjoyment or an **aesthetic** appreciation.



Whenever you read, it's important to be fully aware of your purpose in reading and to adapt the way you approach your material accordingly. This is something you no doubt do instinctively. When you scan the *TV Times* for the new time slot of your favourite show or skim through a lengthy newspaper article just to get an understanding of the bare facts, you automatically read in a manner that's very different from the way you sink into an enthralling novel or study a physics text. Skimming, scanning, reading for retention (often employing a method that involves skimming, predicting, reading carefully, questioning, and reviewing) – all these are methods of reading you've probably been taught in the past and that are wonderful tools for certain specific reading chores. Though you doubtless use them without thinking about them, being careful to match your purpose and method in reading can help you develop these skills to a much greater degree.

### Reading for the Experience



*Literature:  
written works  
intended to be  
appreciated for  
their intrinsic  
qualities*

Of course not all the reading you do is simply to acquire information. Much of it is – or should be – done for the intrinsic worth of the experience itself. Whether it's getting caught up in an absorbing adventure novel, relaxing with a “trashy” (but oh so much fun!) drug-store-rack romance, enjoying the sounds, rhythms, and images of your favourite poetry, or sinking your teeth into a challenging work of “serious” literature, a great deal of the reading people do is done purely for its own sake.

Written works intended to be read simply because of their own intrinsic qualities can be broadly defined as **literature**. In fact, the term can be more broadly applied – to include things people watch (TV dramas, films) and listen to (poetry readings, radio plays), as long as those things are based on language and are meant to entertain or provide an aesthetic experience for viewers and listeners.

No doubt you're fully aware of the pleasure that experiencing literature can provide. Unless you've never enjoyed a well-made movie, read a good book, or appreciated the lyrics of a meaningful song, you've taken pleasure in literature. Sometimes this pleasure is based primarily on the content of the literature, as when you get caught up in the plot of a murder mystery. But sometimes the language itself contributes much to the aesthetic enjoyment literature can provide.

Think back briefly to your own childhood. Do you recall enjoying nursery rhymes? If your ethnic and cultural background is Anglo-Saxon, you may well remember verses like these:

Little Miss Muffet  
Sat on a tuffet,  
Eating her curds and whey;  
Along came a spider,  
Who sat down beside her,  
And frightened Miss Muffet away.

Peter, Peter, pumpkin eater,  
Had a wife and couldn't keep her;  
Put her in a pumpkin shell,  
And there he kept her very well.

**M**ary, Mary, quite contrary  
How does your garden grow?  
With silver bells  
And cockle shells  
And pretty maids all in a row.

**H**e y diddle diddle,  
The cat and the fiddle  
The cow jumped over the moon;  
The little dog laughed  
to see such sport,  
And the dish ran away with the spoon.

Georgie Porgie

seised to / n / f / t / e / y / p / o / o / d /  
pocket / o / f / p / o / s / i / e / s /  
Hush, hush, hush,  
Ring around the rosie

Georgie Porgie, pudding and pie,  
Kissed the girls and made them cry;  
When the boys came out to play,  
ran away.



*H*umpty Dumpty sat on the wall  
*H*umpty Dumpty had a great fall,  
*A*ll the king's horses  
*A*nd all the king's men  
*C*ouldn't put *H*u<sup>m</sup><sub>pty</sub> together again.

Unless you knew the historical origins of rhymes like these (and what child does?), their content wouldn't have meant much to you. What, then, is it that children enjoy so much about this kind of nonsense verse that makes them insist that their parents recite them over and over again?





Whether your personal preferences tend toward watching a well-scripted movie, listening to the thoughtful lyrics of good popular music, enjoying the tense prose of a skillfully crafted novel, or experiencing the delights of good poetry recited by a trained Shakespearean actor, this ability to take aesthetic pleasure in literature, written or spoken, is one you should continue to develop and strengthen all your life.

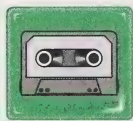
The poem “The House was Quiet and the World was Calm” by American poet Wallace Stevens describes the experience of losing touch with the world around you while absorbed in a good book. It’s an experience you may know well – when you’re so caught up in what you’re reading that you seem to become one with the book.

Turn to page 93 of *Literary Experiences* and read “The House was Quiet and the World was Calm.” As you read, open yourself to the poem’s language, noting how it helps develop the feeling of the experience the poet is describing. Read the poem two or three times before answering the questions that follow.



1. In this poem, language, rhythm, and subject matter all work to produce a feeling – an emotional response – in the reader. In a sentence or two try to describe the feelings you experienced when reading the poem.
2. This poem contains a good deal of repetition.
  - a. Point out two examples of the use of repetition in the poem.
  - b. What effect does this repetition have on the reader?
3. Note the poem's **diction** – the specific words the poet uses. How do they contribute to the feeling the reader experiences?
4. Practise reading the poem aloud several times, using such things as volume, speed, tone and emphasis to enhance the **mood** you think the poet intended to create. When you feel confident, tape yourself reading the poem; then play your recording for a partner or family member. Ask this person to describe the mood or feeling he or she got from hearing your oral interpretation.

***Diction:** the choice of words and level of language in speaking or writing*



***Mood:** the pervading feeling or impression produced in the reader or listener by a work of literature*



### Compare your responses with those in the Appendix, Section 3: Activity 1.

The preceding questions asked you to think about how various elements of “The House was Quiet and the World was Calm” contributed to the feeling or mood the poem creates. Its gentle rhythm, its repetition, the words the poet uses, the almost conversational level of language, the subject matter discussed – all these elements clearly contribute to the poem’s mood and help get across the message and feeling the poet wished to convey to his readers.

A good work of literature should be able to satisfy a reader on all these fronts; reading good literature involves both understanding and taking an aesthetic pleasure in the way the piece was written. A nonsense poem full of wonderful rhythms and sounds can’t satisfy intellectually; conversely, a work of abstract thought that’s dry and dull can’t satisfy aesthetically. It’s when these two elements – understanding and aesthetic pleasure – come together and complement each other that a truly satisfying experience of reading for pleasure can occur.

The quality of a work of literature according to which all the elements work together like this and contribute to the purpose the author had in mind in writing the piece is called **artistic unity**. It’s essential to a work of good literature that it have artistic unity. If, for example, the poem you’ve just read had a fast, snappy rhythm or contained harsh, grating words, its artistic unity would be lost.

***Artistic unity:** in writing, the quality of every element in a work of literature being essential to the writer’s purpose*



You'll be examining other works of literature for artistic unity later in the course. Right now it's important that you understand the concept – and that you try to start thinking of the artistic unity of pieces of literature you read.

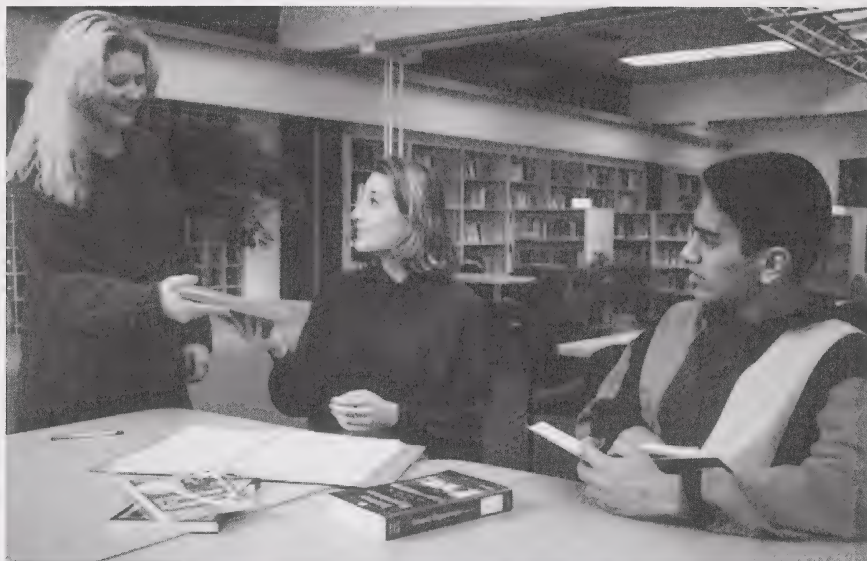


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### WRITING FOLDER

In your Writing Folder respond to **one** of the following ideas.

1. Does “The House was Quiet and the World was Calm” describe an experience with which you can identify, or is it one you find foreign? Elaborate on your response by describing how you feel about reading literature.
2. What’s your favourite way of experiencing literature – reading silently, listening to someone else speak or read, watching plays, movies, TV dramas? Or does it, perhaps, depend on your mood, or the circumstances, or the literature itself? Write a few paragraphs explaining your response.

Just as good writers and speakers must always be aware of their purpose(s) in writing or speaking, so too must good readers be aware of why they’re reading – and tailor their reading strategies accordingly. As you read the literary selections you’ll encounter in this course – and when you approach any other reading material – always use an appropriate reading technique. Above all, whenever you read literature, be sure to leave yourself open to the aesthetic experience such writing can offer you.

## Activity 2: Stories and Their Origins

### Traditional Narratives



**Fiction:**  
literature  
created by the  
imagination

**Nonfiction:**  
literature  
concerned with  
actual events

**Narrative:** a  
story consisting  
of a series of  
events – usually  
arranged in  
chronological  
order

**Folklore:** the  
collection of  
stories, tales,  
and legends  
particular to a  
cultural,  
community,  
religious, or  
family group

**Folktales:** a  
traditional oral  
tale, often  
dealing with  
magic and  
enchantment –  
the forerunner  
of the fairy tale

**Anecdote:** a  
very short story  
relating one  
specific event

**Myth:** a  
traditional story,  
perhaps based  
on truth, used to  
explain part of  
the world view  
of a people

You've no doubt been aware for a long time of the division of literature into works of **fiction** and **nonfiction**, and you probably know that short stories are classified as fictional works. But are all stories entirely works of the imagination?

The fact is that telling and listening to stories is an activity that probably goes back as far as the origins of speech. Originally most stories would likely have been simple **narratives** relating real occurrences – a successful hunt, perhaps, or a hair's-breadth escape from a predatory animal. Over time, and after many retellings, such stories would have become embellished, exaggerated, and expanded; some of them would eventually become part of the **folklore** of the people who told them.



Surprisingly, perhaps, this tradition of creating, communicating, and passing down stories still plays an important role in people's lives, even in our high-tech, electronic world. The tradition of the oral story is alive and very healthy in the late twentieth century. Most people tell and listen to oral stories every day – to explain their ideas and actions ("Look, Dad, I'll tell you exactly what happened and why I couldn't get home earlier."), to entertain friends ("And Alphonse was so scared that when the cop asked him his name, he gave mine instead of his own!"), and for many other reasons.

Stories fall into a wide range of categories. Here are a few types with which you're probably familiar.

- folktales
- anecdotes
- myths
- legends
- fables
- tall tales
- family stories
- community stories



**Legend:** a traditional story accepted as truth by many people but which cannot be proven

**Fable:** a short fictional story, in which animals often talk, used to teach a lesson

**Tall tale:** a comically exaggerated fictional story

## Anecdotes and Fables

Doubtless you tell anecdotes every day; whenever you relate an event from home or school, or tell a joke, that's what you're doing. You're probably also very familiar with folktales, even if you don't consciously think much about them. If you were brought up with stories like "Hansel and Gretel," "Cinderella," and "Sleeping Beauty" – or their equivalents in other cultural traditions – this sort of traditional story has likely helped shape your ideas and values on a variety of matters to a far greater extent than you're aware.



## Modern-Day Legends



OK, I can see how folktales have played a part in shaping my values, but not those other narrative forms – like myths, legends, and fables. Maybe they did in the old days, but not anymore.

Don't be so sure. Some traditional types of orally transmitted narratives are still very much a part of our lives, even though their appearance may have altered somewhat. A good example is the urban legend. Read on.



Many sociologists point to what they call *urban legends* as a modern-day version of this traditional type of folklore. These urban legends are stories that people tell, fully believing them to be true; but somehow they always happened to a friend of a friend or somebody in Toronto – or was it New York or Chicago? The truth is that these modern-day legends can never be pinned down – probably because they never really happened.

Following are two examples of urban legends. Have you heard them before?

The driver of a cement mixer, who happened to be driving down his own street, noticed an unfamiliar car in his driveway. Being the jealous sort, he stopped and peeked through a livingroom window, where he saw his wife with a man he didn't know. Jumping to the conclusion that his wife was having an affair, the enraged husband poured a load of cement through the car window – only to discover later that his wife had just bought the car – as a birthday gift for him. The man inside was the car salesman who'd delivered it.

In some large city (the location varies with the telling) maintenance workers, while inspecting the sewers, were attacked (and eaten?) by an alligator. It seems someone had flushed a pet baby alligator down the toilet; it grew and grew in the city's sewer system, where it still lurks looking for victims.



1. Why do you think this sort of urban legend continues to be a popular form of story in our modern, sophisticated society?
2. Do you know other urban legends. If so, tell one.

Compare your responses with those in the Appendix, Section 3: Activity 2.

### Fables

You probably grew up knowing a number of popular fables – stories in which animals frequently talk and which are intended to teach a lesson or moral. If you grew up in an English-speaking household, for example, “The Tortoise and the Hare” is a story you likely know well. Fables have long been a popular method by which society imparts values it considers important to the next generation.

3. a. What moral does “The Tortoise and the Hare” teach?
- b. What value(s) do you see as underlying this moral?
- c. To what degree do you agree with these values? Explain your answer.



Compare your responses with those in the Appendix, Section 3: Activity 2.





Now for a look at a more recent fable. Turn to page 85 of *Literary Experiences* and read the short work “The Camel Dances” by the American writer Arnold Lobel. Then answer the questions that follow.

4. Why can the story “The Camel Dances” be called a *fable*?
5. Do you agree with the moral and values presented at the bottom? Why or why not?
6. Are there any other lessons that can be derived from “The Camel Dances”? If so, suggest one or two.
7. Most traditional fables leave it up to the reader to determine the moral presented, yet Arnold Lobel opted to spell it out at the end. Do you think this was a good idea? Explain your reasons.



Compare your responses with those in the Appendix, Section 3: Activity 2.

### WRITING FOLDER

In your Writing Folder respond to the following idea.



Most families and communities have stories of their own: the time when Aunt Lucille was kicked by the cow, or when old Mr. Nesbitt survived two nights in his car, lost in a blizzard. Think of a family, neighbourhood, or community story you know and write it down. Try to make it as interesting as you can; don't be afraid to exaggerate a bit.

### Telling a Good Story



The kinds of stories you're looking at in this activity are most often transmitted orally; they're informal, short, and entertaining, but not often great literature. But have you ever noticed – no doubt you have – how some people can tell a story or joke so well while others simply can't seem to do it at all? Have you ever thought about what makes a good story teller?

8. Before reading on, think of people you know who always captivate their audiences whenever they relate an incident or tell a joke. List as many reasons as you can why this person is such a good speaker.

Here's a list one class came up with when asked to brainstorm the same question. Compare these ideas to your own.

#### Good story tellers

- sound confident
- are aware of their audience (If listeners are restless, for example, they don't continue on regardless.)
- know the story well (They don't stumble, backtrack, and forget the punch line.)
- create a good beginning to grab listeners' attention
- use their voices well (They'll alter volume, pitch, and speed and emphasize important words, for example.)
- use facial expression and hand gestures
- build up suspense right to the end – and then stop
- include lots of action
- have a good sense of timing (They pause in the right places, and for the right length of time.)
- savour the story themselves (They don't rush through apologetically to get it over with.)
- know when to stop



*Critique: a  
critical  
appraisal*

9. Turn on your companion audiotape and listen to the anecdote related there – about a camper's encounter with a bear. Then, using the criteria in the preceding list, along with any others you can think of, write up a short (one-or-two-paragraph) **critique** of the storyteller's technique. In your response suggest how you might have done things differently.

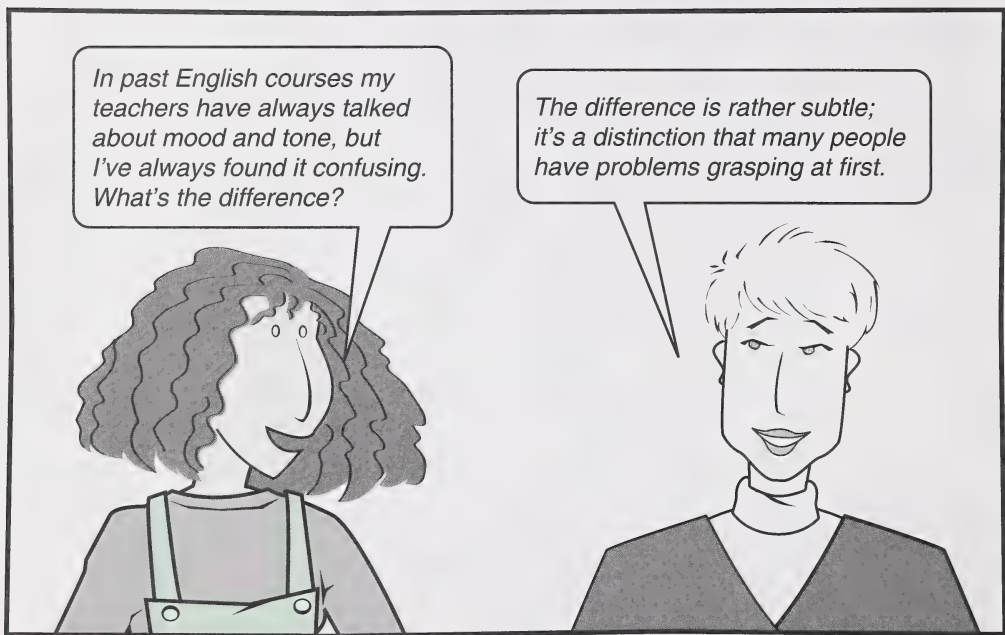
Compare your response with the one in the Appendix, Section 3: Activity 2.

## Mood, Tone, and Purpose in Speaking and Writing



Earlier in this section, while looking at the poem “The House was Quiet and the World was Calm,” you were asked to describe the poem’s mood. *Mood* was defined as “the pervading feeling or impression produced in the reader or listener by a work of literature.” Sometimes a selection will make you laugh or just feel good; you might describe the mood of that selection as *comical* or *happy*. Another selection might have a sombre or depressing mood. A mood can be serious or friendly, light or heavy.

Good readers and listeners are always sensitive to the mood of any work of literature they read or hear.



**Tone:** the attitude of a speaker or writer toward a subject or audience reflected in choice of words and emphasis

**Formal:** characterized by strict observance of forms and correctness

**Colloquialism:** a familiar, conversational expression

**Informal:** casual, natural

Mood and **tone** are closely related, but they aren’t quite the same thing. Tone isn’t the overall feeling readers or listeners get; rather, it’s the attitude writers or speakers take toward their subject matter and audience. A speaker, for instance, may be angry or playful. A writer can be impersonal or friendly. Sometimes a tone is ironic, sometimes it’s satirical (concepts you’ll be looking at in greater depth later in the course). A tone may be humble or arrogant, soothing or lively. Naturally, it’s very often the case that the same words can be used to describe the mood and tone of something you read or hear, but it’s important to remember that you’re talking about two rather different things.

If you’re asked to describe the tone of a selection you’ve heard or read, how do you go about determining it? Look principally at the diction of the writer or speaker – the words and level of language that person chooses to use. Are the words commonplace, everyday ones; or are they big words – ones with which not everyone might be familiar? Is the level of language **formal**, with no contractions, slang, or **colloquialisms**; or is it **informal** – casual and relaxed? Are sentence structures long and complex, or are they short and simple?



Hey, lady, ya got any loose change?

My good man, I will have you know that, my philanthropic inclinations to the contrary notwithstanding, I am categorically not – nor ever have been – in the habit of dispensing largesse to people of your ilk.



Pay attention to word choice and level of language in determining tone.

*Pitch: the highness and lowness of sound*

*Body language: the use of bodily postures and gestures to convey meaning*

Of course speakers have many methods of conveying tone not available to writers. They can alter their volume, speed, and **pitch**. They can lay heavy emphasis on some words and lightly skim over others. If they're speaking to a live audience, they can convey all sorts of things through **body language** – postures, hand movements, facial expressions, and so on. Try watching a stand-up comic or a TV sitcom someday with the sound off; note how much good comedians can convey solely through the use of body language.

Along with cultivating a sensitivity to the mood and tone of written and oral literature, always try to be aware of the purposes of writers and speakers. Are they trying to make you laugh? cry? think? relax? get fired up? take action? Just as good writers and speakers should always be aware of their audience and purpose, so should good readers and listeners try to be aware of why what they read and hear was ever communicated to them in the first place.

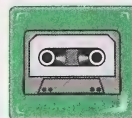
Later in the course you'll be looking in greater detail at mood and tone as they relate to written works of literature, but right now it's time for a bit of practice in identifying and labelling mood, tone, and purpose in oral stories.



10. a. Listen to the next two readings on your companion audiotape. They're both accounts of the same vacation trip as narrated by two different family members. Try to label the mood and tone of each narrative and identify the likely purpose each storyteller had in mind. You might set up your response in chart form as follows:

	Mood	Tone	Purpose
Story 1			
Story 2			

- b. Now give reasons for the way you identified and labelled the tones of the two stories. Point to specific details in the narratives.



11. In Activity 1 you did a Writing Folder exercise in which you related a favourite family or community story. Go back to that story now and record yourself reading it on audiotape. Aim at creating a specific mood in your audience, and adopt a tone likely to create that mood. Use all the voice techniques you can to fulfil your purpose. Play your recording for a friend or family member and see how successful you were.

Compare your responses with those in the Appendix, Section 3: Activity 2.

## The Short Story

*Genre: a form of literature – for example, the novel, the short story, or poetry*

*Short Story: a written prose story limited in length, plot, characters, setting, and mood*

Anecdotes, legends, fables, tall tales – these and other traditional forms of stories, though sometimes written down, have historically been passed on as part of the oral tradition of literature. In the nineteenth century, however, this sort of narrative tale gave birth to a more complex tradition – that of the literary form, or **genre**, known as the **short story**. The writer most often credited with creating this formal literary genre is the American, Edgar Allan Poe, best known for his macabre tales of horror and suspense. Three other notable writers who helped develop the short story were Washington Irving and Nathaniel Hawthorne in the United States and Guy de Maupassant in France. You may well have encountered works by one or more of these writers in past courses.



*I've read a bunch of Edgar Allan Poe's horror stories. "The Pit and the Pendulum," "The Fall of the House of Usher," and "The Cask of Amontillado" are my favourites. I think he also wrote the first real murder mysteries, didn't he?*

*I have Hawthorne's Twice-Told Tales at home. It's a collection of short stories, though I've got to admit I've never read any.*



Simply put, a short story is a story that's not long. Setting a word limit on this form of fiction isn't a satisfactory definition; but, generally speaking, a short story is usually about three thousand to four thousand words in length and can be read in one sitting. A short story is compact; it has no irrelevant material or pointless digressions. A short story concerns itself mainly with one impression or effect and usually centres on a single situation, incident, or character. It has few characters, and these aren't fully developed. A short story generally has a conflict situation – a struggle between two opposing forces. The conflict arises from a very definite set of circumstances, and action progresses quickly to a climax. Every speech and action contributes to this climax.

Module 2 will be devoted to a study of the short story. First, however, this module will finish up with a look at the fictional worlds created by story writers.

### Activity 3: Entering a Fictional World

#### Fictional Worlds



Stories, whether they're realistic or fantastic, serious or purely entertaining, plausible or entirely unbelievable, invite readers into a whole new world – a fictional world.

Whenever you sit down to read or listen to a story, you're asked to temporarily withdraw your conscious attention from the real world around you and enter into another one created by the storyteller.

Usually the world you enter when you begin a story is very much like the real one; often it's identical. Sometimes it's a rather different world, however; perhaps it's the world of the Roman Empire, medieval Europe, or the frontier period in America. Or perhaps it's a world that's entirely the creation of the writer – the world as that person thinks it might be a thousand years from now on a planet in a different galaxy. Maybe it's an invented world not set in any particular time or space – a fantasy world created by the writer entirely out of his or her imagination. But whether you're reading a realistic work set in the world as you know it, a work of historical fiction, a science-fiction story, or a work of pure fantasy, you're being asked to accept someone else's fictional world for as long as the story lasts.



Have you ever considered how story writers (and storytellers) get their audiences to accept their fictional worlds – and how they can quickly cue them into the sorts of worlds they’ve created? You’re no doubt so used to reading, watching, and listening to fictional works that you take this process for granted; but establishing a story’s world is really quite an accomplishment.



Turn to page 53 of *Literary Experiences* and read **only the first page** of the short story “Harrison Bergeron” by the American writer Kurt Vonnegut, Jr.

1. a. In two or three sentences describe the fictional world into which Vonnegut invites his readers.
- b. What first cued you to the fact that this was a world unlike your own – a world that would require you to use your imagination to accept?



Now turn to page 439 of *Literary Experiences* and read **the first page** of “Score/Score” by Canadian writer Phyllis Gotlieb.

2. What alerts you on this page to the fact that again you’re being invited into a world unlike your own?



Next, turn to page 218 of *Literary Experiences* and read **the first page** of “The Dead Child” by Canadian writer Gabrielle Roy.

3. a. Briefly describe the world in which this story will take place.
- b. Identify a few details that quickly alerted you to the fact that this would be a realistic world – not quite your own, perhaps, but a familiar world – one you’d find readily accessible as a reader.

**Compare your responses with those in the Appendix, Section 3: Activity 3.**



## WRITING FOLDER

In your Writing Folder respond to the following ideas.

Having read these three first pages of three separate stories, which world do you find most inviting? Which least inviting? Why?

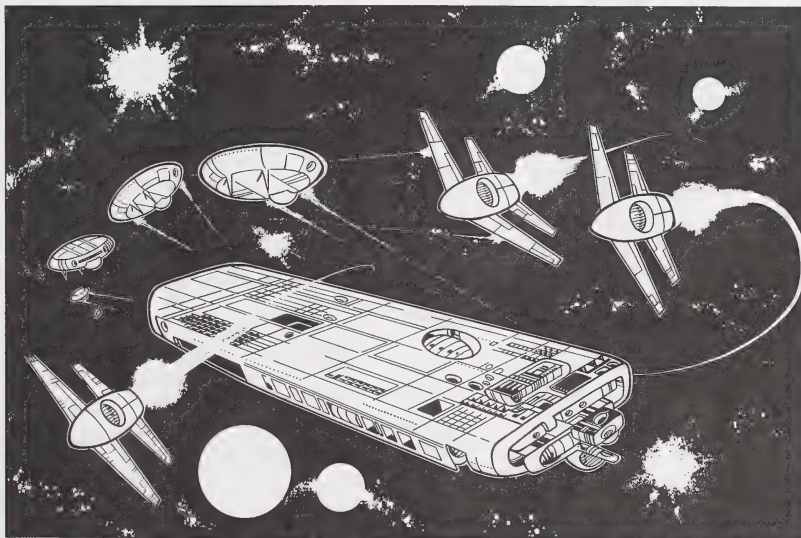
## The Importance of Verisimilitude



Two of the three stories whose first pages you've just read invited you into rather unfamiliar worlds. As a reader, you quickly realized you'd have to suspend some of your understanding of the basic rules of the real world and open yourself to a new set of rules. But what if those new rules were too unfamiliar? What if they flew in the face of what you know to be the way people think and behave?

The fact is that even writers of science fiction and fantasy have to ground their stories in things readers can accept as believable. The fictional worlds they create must be plausible. People in a story may be living thousands of years in the future and in a distant galaxy, yet they still must act like people. Good writers always give their readers that feeling of truth in what they write – that sense that “yes, that sounds like what someone would do in that situation” – if they want their readers to accept the fictional worlds they create. This feeling of truth or plausibility is called **verisimilitude**.

*Verisimilitude:*  
the quality of  
seeming realistic  
– of appearing  
to be true and  
plausible



Return to page 53 of *Literary Experiences* and reread the first page of “Harrison Bergeron.”

There's a great deal that stretches readers' credulity here – their willingness and ability to believe this world. Nobody smarter than others? Nobody better looking? Yet Vonnegut is quite successful in drawing his readers in.

4. Point to a few details on this page that help Vonnegut achieve verisimilitude – a sense of realism – in his writing.



Now turn to page 439 and reread the first page of “Score/Score.”

5. What details help create verisimilitude on this page?

Compare your responses with those in the Appendix, Section 3: Activity 3.

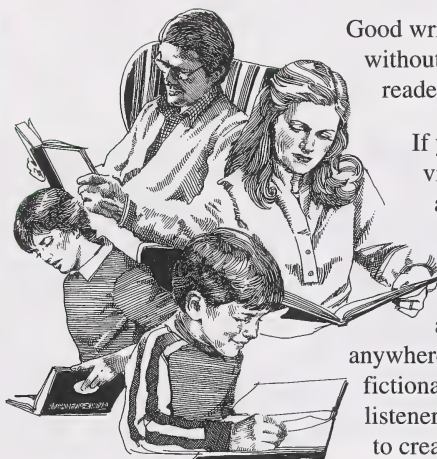


## WRITING FOLDER

In your Writing Folder respond to the following ideas.

Watch a television show or read a story that presents a fictional world. Does this world have the quality of verisimilitude? What links do you see between your world and the fictional one?

## Active Reading



Good writers can create the most fantastic fictional worlds without sacrificing verisimilitude. But what role does the reader play in creating such fictional worlds?

If you've always thought of reading (or listening or viewing) as a passive activity – one in which you just sit and let the words, sights, and sounds wash over you – you've been very much mistaken. All communication is a two-way street; one person creates a message, and one interprets it. This fact is as true when it comes to the world of fiction as anywhere else. True, it's the writers or storytellers who create fictional worlds, who speak or write the words; but readers, listeners, or viewers must imaginatively use this raw material to create in their own minds the fictional worlds they enter.

Reading, viewing, and listening to works of fiction are, then, active, not passive, processes. They require your participation. And it's important to realize that no two people will interpret what they read, see, and hear in just the same way. As was pointed out in Section 1, your lifetime of experiences, your family and community background, your nationality, your ethnicity, your genetic code – these and many more factors all contribute to the way you interpret what you read, see, and hear. They make your interpretations unique.

But it doesn't end there. Good readers, viewers, and listeners work hard at being active – at participating as much as they can in the communication process. Good readers, for example, meet writers halfway. They look through a piece of literature first to determine the author's purpose. Good readers will make **inferences** while reading and then check to see if their hypotheses are correct. This is why it's often a good idea to reread a complicated section of a story to fully understand it. When you check back – for example, to see if a character in a mystery story really did have an alibi for a particular time – you're playing detective and being an active reader. Checking details and the accuracy of your inferences is a productive way of reading.



*Inference: a conclusion not actually stated but arrived at by weighing the evidence*



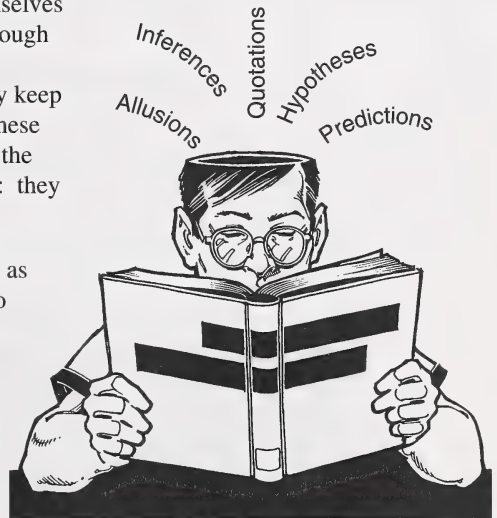
Active reading also occurs when you make connections between your past experiences and the material you're reading. When you find yourself asking questions as you read, you're also interacting with the text. Sometimes you might disagree with a statement and check it out with someone who knows or with a second text – another instance of active reading.

As they read, some active readers make notes in the margin to themselves and to the author. This practice provides a genuine and a lasting interaction with the text, for those responses are right there for these readers next time they pick up the same books. (But be sure the books belong to you before you try this!).

Other readers find that asking questions of themselves and the text is a good way to work their way through complex material. By asking key questions and reading to answer these questions, they find they keep from getting lost or bored. The key in each of these techniques isn't so much what's done, but what the readers accomplish by completing these actions: they stay actively involved while reading.

Some people describe this sort of active reading as "making meaning" because it requires readers to participate, along with writers, in the process of creating meaningful messages out of black marks on paper. If you're an active meaning-maker when you read, you'll always try to do the following:

- select an appropriate reading strategy
- use context clues to determine meaning
- predict future events
- ask questions
- hypothesize explanations – and test your hypotheses
- make inferences from things writers tell you
- use reference tools (such as dictionaries and encyclopedias) to aid comprehension



Viewing should be an active process as well. When you watch movies or television, do you make predictions – either to yourself or aloud – about what will happen next? If so, you're being an active viewer. This goes as well, of course, for listening.

Now it's time to put your active, meaning-making skills to work. Earlier in this activity (twice, in fact) you read the first page of Kurt Vonnegut Jr.'s short story "Harrison Bergeron." Either think back to what you read or turn again to page 53 of *Literary Experiences* and reread it one more time.

6. Based on the information this first page gives you, tell what you expect will happen in the rest of the story. What ideas might Vonnegut develop in this work of fiction? Of course you won't be able to come up with exact details, but try to predict some of the possibilities that the clues of the first page suggest.

**Compare your responses with those in the Appendix, Section 3: Activity 3.**





Now read the rest of “Harrison Bergeron.” Allow yourself as much as possible to slip into the fictional world the story creates, but don’t just passively accept it. Read actively! If you don’t find Vonnegut’s world a convincing one, be prepared to say why.

7. How accurate were your predictions in question 6?
8. In a paragraph or two describe the fictional world of “Harrison Bergeron” as it’s revealed in the entire story.
9.
  - a. To what degree do you think Kurt Vonnegut achieved verisimilitude in this story? Give examples, for and against.
  - b. To what degree do you think he abandoned an attempt to achieve verisimilitude in favour of deliberate exaggeration? Give examples and suggest reasons.

Compare your responses with those in the Appendix, Section 3: Activity 3.

### WRITING FOLDER

In your Writing Folder respond to the following ideas.

What are your own feelings about the fictional world of “Harrison Bergeron”? Do you think the writer achieved what he set out to do in creating this world? What would you have done differently had you written the story?



*I know what I'd have done differently in that story. I'd have had Harrison make toast of that Glampers woman. Then George would tear off his mental handicap radio and the two of them would start a revolution!*

*Well, that does sound satisfying at one level, but wouldn't the story lose its point? There'd be no warning to readers about the dangers of enforced equalization of people, and what believability the story ever had would be lost.*

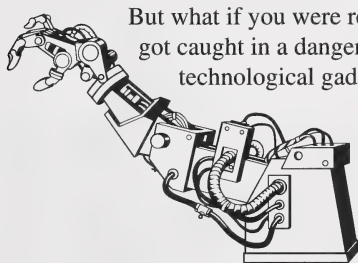


## Follow-up Activities

If you found the activities difficult, you should complete the Extra Help. If you understand the concepts clearly, you should complete the Enrichment.

### Extra Help

The concept of verisimilitude in fictional worlds may seem strange to you. You may find it difficult to understand, for example, how in a fantasy or a science fiction story set in an entirely different world, anything need seem “realistic” at all. Can’t writers of fantasy stories dream up anything they want to put into their worlds?



But what if you were reading a sci-fi adventure story, and every single time the hero got caught in a dangerous situation, he or she at once revealed some new power or technological gadget that instantly provided a way out? You’d probably soon throw the book away in disgust. Of course this is precisely the sort of thing that does happen on children’s cartoon shows; Professor Gadget, for instance, can make anything pop out of his hat to save the day. But somehow, after a certain age, viewers and readers demand more realism – even in an imaginary world.

But what’s most important in terms of verisimilitude in fictional worlds is that human nature remain believable. Even in a fantasy world, people must behave the way we expect them to behave. They must feel fear, anger, depression, happiness at appropriate moments; they must respond the way we know we’d respond – or could, perhaps, if we were just a bit more courageous; they must have believable human virtues and failings. On the first page of Phyllis Gottlieb’s “Score/Score,” for example, the student makes mistakes in grammar and spelling, and the teaching machine corrects them – in ways readers recognize at once from their own school days. The world Gottlieb has created has instantly recognizable patterns of human interaction, and readers feel comfortable even in this alien situation.

1. If you have any old comic books, or a younger brother or sister who has some, dig out a few, preferably ones that would qualify as fantasy or science fiction. Read the comics and carefully examine the pictures. To what degree are the worlds they present convincing? To what degree do they lack verisimilitude?
2. Watch some Saturday-morning cartoon shows. Do any of them strive at all for verisimilitude? If you know any young children who regularly watch these shows, ask them which are their favourites. Is there any relationship between the believability of the cartoon worlds and the satisfaction young viewers take in the shows?
3. Watch one of your own favourite television shows – with a critical eye. Evaluate it for verisimilitude. Now watch a show you dislike, doing the same thing. Is there a correlation between the pleasure you take in the shows and their believability?



Compare your responses with those in the Appendix, Section 3: Extra Help.



## Enrichment

Do **one or more** of the following.

1. In Activity 2 of this section you looked at a number of traditional types of narratives. One type that was mentioned but not discussed was the myth. Myths play a tremendously important role in creating, transmitting, and revealing the values, beliefs, and attitudes of the groups whose stories they are. Much of a culture's fundamental, usually unquestioned, values and assumptions can be found in its mythology.

But more than this, myths can make for fascinating reading in their own right. You may well have studied some of the mythology of Ancient Greece and Rome in earlier grades. If you found learning about ancient mythology interesting, consider digging into it in greater detail – and cast your net wide to include myths from other cultures and parts of the world. Your librarian should be able to help direct you to appropriate resources.

2. In Activity 1 reference was made to the delight young children take in nursery rhymes, and several rhymes were presented. You may well recall these and many other such verses from your childhood.

But have you ever looked into the origins of everyday nursery rhymes? Some of them might really shock you. “Ring Around the Rosie,” for instance, sung by countless laughing children, was originally composed about the bubonic plague in England, which killed innumerable people. The rhyme describes the sores on the victims' bodies and the flowers people carried to mask smells and ward off sickness. The last line, “We all fall down,” speaks for itself.

If this sort of historical study of the origins of nursery rhymes interests you, ask your librarian for a copy of *The Oxford Dictionary of Nursery Rhymes*. It will make for fascinating reading.

3. Activity 3 looked in part at the fictional worlds created by writers of fantasy and science fiction.

Have you ever read good fantasy novels? If not, you may be surprised at how much of this sort of writing is available. Your librarian should be able to direct you to good fantasy fiction, but you have to be careful with this genre; there's a good deal of inferior fantasy writing out there.



4. In this section the word *literature* was defined and reference was made to the distinction between fictional and nonfictional literary works. In this module you've examined examples of several genres – poems, short stories, and essays – that represent both the fictional and nonfictional sides of the literary spectrum.

For a more comprehensive look at the various subclassifications that fall under the umbrella term *literature*, watch the film *The Spectrum of Literature*, part 3 of the ACCESS Network series *Communicating with a Purpose* (catalogue #VC213203). This film offers a clearly presented and easy-to-follow breakdown of the various literary genres and how they relate to each other; but note that it works with a broader definition of the term *literature* than the one given in this module. It defines literature as “language committed to the written word for the purpose of communication.”

You should be able to get hold of the video through your local media centre.

## Conclusion

In this section you've seen how different reading styles should be adopted for different reading situations and purposes. After that, the focus was shifted to the reading of literature, and the historical role of stories and the oral tradition of literature were briefly examined. The section ended with an examination of how story writers (and storytellers) invite their audiences into a fictional world – a world which, even in a work of fantasy, must be believable enough to convince the reader to go along with the events that occur in it.

Assignment  
Booklet

### ASSIGNMENT

In your Assignment Booklet complete the assignment for this section.

## MODULE SUMMARY

Module 1 has provided you with an introduction to English 30. Section 1 presented you with the structure and requirements of the course while getting you thinking about the role language plays in your life. In Section 2 you looked more specifically at the writing process, focusing chiefly on expressive writing and personal essays. Finally, Module 3 turned to reading, in particular the reading of literature, and prepared you for the study of the short story that will be carried out in Module 2.

Assignment  
Booklet

### FINAL MODULE ASSIGNMENT

In your Assignment Booklet complete the final module assignment for this module.





# Appendix



**Glossary**

**Suggested Answers**

## Glossary

**aesthetic:** relating to beauty rather than practicality

**anecdote:** a very short story relating one specific event

**artistic unity:** in writing, the quality of every element in a work of literature being essential to the writer's purpose

**body language:** the use of bodily postures and gestures to convey meaning

**brainstorming:** generating as many ideas as possible without restraint or criticism

**colloquialism:** a familiar, conversational expression

**critique:** a critical appraisal

**diction:** the choice of words and level of language in speaking or writing

**drafting:** writing a first version

**editing:** in writing, the process of correcting grammatical problems and surface errors like capitalization, spelling, and punctuation

**essay:** a short piece of nonfictional writing in which an author presents a viewpoint on a subject in a personal way

**expressive writing:** informal, often experimental writing that explores, reflects on, and expresses ideas and feelings

**fable:** a short fictional story, in which animals often talk, used to teach a lesson

**fiction:** literature created by the imagination

**folklore:** the collection of stories, tales, and legends particular to a cultural, community, religious, or family group

**folktale:** a traditional oral tale, often dealing with magic and enchantment – the forerunner of the fairy tale

**formal:** characterized by strict observance of forms and correctness

**genre:** a form of literature – for example, the novel, the short story, or poetry

**inference:** a conclusion not actually stated but arrived at by weighing the evidence

**informal:** casual; natural

**legend:** a traditional story accepted as true by many people but which cannot be proven

**literature:** written works intended to be appreciated for their intrinsic qualities

**mood:** the pervading feeling or impression produced in the reader or listener by a work of literature

**myth:** a traditional story, perhaps based on truth, used to explain part of the world view of a people

**narrative:** a story consisting of a series of events – usually arranged in chronological order

**nonfiction:** literature concerned with actual events

**pitch:** the highness and lowness of sound

**prewriting:** the process of generating ideas and planning for first-draft writing

**revising:** in writing, the process of revisiting and reworking an earlier draft

**short story:** a written prose story limited in length, plot, characters, setting, and mood

**tall tale:** a comically exaggerated fictional story

**thesis:** a writer's main argument: the central point a writer wants to make

**tone:** the attitude of a speaker or writer toward a subject or audience reflected in choice of words and emphasis

**verisimilitude:** the quality of seeming realistic – of appearing to be true and plausible

**voice:** in writing, the personal and recognizable style of a writer

**webbing:** connecting ideas related to a single idea in clusters around it (also called *clustering* or *concept mapping*)

## Suggested Answers

### Section 1: Activity 1

3. a. Two selections were written by Irish writers (see page 534).
- b. Eliot was born in St. Louis, Missouri (see page 515).
- c. The four genres are nonfiction, short stories, poetry, and drama.
- d. Your answer could be either “My Apology” by Woody Allen or “Picnic on the Battlefield” by Fernando Arrabal (see page 531).
- e. Page 532 would direct you to those selections.
- f. Answers will vary depending on the handbook used.
- g. Responses will vary here. If your handbook recommends the Modern Language Association style, your entry will look like this:

Golding, William. Lord of the Flies. London: Faber and Faber, 1958.

If your handbook recommends the American Psychological Association style, your entry will look like this:

Golding, W. (1958). Lord of the flies. London: Faber and Faber.

Your handbook may well present both styles of bibliographic entries.

- h. This icon alerts you to the fact that at this point there’s something to listen to on your companion audiotape.
- i. It’s discussed in Section 2: Activity 2.
- j. The number of marks assigned to each assignment is indicated in the Module Overview under the heading “Evaluation.”

### Section 1: Activity 2

1. Responses, of course, will be personal. What’s important here isn’t the individual influences you come up with but that you start to become aware of your own individuality and how it will colour everything you experience – including everything you read, see, or listen to.
2. Again, responses will vary greatly. Were you surprised at the different types of situations in which you find yourself?
3. a. The poet seems to be expressing her joyful awareness of the poetry that surrounded her in the city even while she was engaged in a simple experience like walking down the street. Your interpretation may vary somewhat.
- b. Responses will vary, but this is a highly charged, happy, enthusiastic poem. The reader can feel the intense joy the poet took in her awareness of the poetry all around her.
4. Responses will vary; almost every line in this poem presents a vivid image – for example, “poems glowing in the bushes” or “poems brushing the tops of chimneys.” Were you able to describe what makes each one you selected effective?



5. a. Responses will vary. Does she, perhaps mean that as a young woman beginning a career as a poet she was “full” of unwritten, potential poetry that waited only to be actualized? Or does she mean that wherever she went she was tuned into the poetic possibilities and qualities of the people and things she encountered? Or does this all, ultimately, boil down to the same thing?
- b. Responses will vary. The first few words simply describe her as she saw herself – tall, fast-walking, and not given to much conversation. But what does she mean by calling herself a “poet’s accomplice”? Is this her poetic way of saying that, while not yet a poet herself, she had every intention of someday expressing the poetry she felt all around her? Or is she suggesting that while she lacked the ability ever to be a good poet herself, she’d do what she could to help “all the poets of the city” develop their craft? Have you another idea?
6. How did your oral interpretation of the poem work out? Were you able to achieve the effect you wanted by changing things like pitch, volume, and speed? This sort of thing often seems unnatural if you’re not used to doing it; but you’ll be getting more practice later in the course.

## Section 1: Follow-up Activities

### Extra Help

1. There should be a hyphen in the first sentence:

That’s a well-explained idea

The reason is that “well-explained” is a compound modifier preceding the noun it modifies; in other words, the two words act as one adjective, and they come before the noun.

2. The correctly capitalized title is

Happiness Is Living It Up

People often incorrectly choose not to capitalize small words in titles. This title contains three two-letter words, but all three should be capitalized. “Is” is a verb and “it” is a pronoun – both important words in the title. “Up” is a preposition less than five letters long, so ordinarily it wouldn’t be capitalized in a title; however, the first and last words of titles must always be capitalized.

3. The sentence should be corrected to read

Andreas gave the money to Maria and me.

The reason is that “to Maria and me” is a prepositional phrase; the words “him” and “me,” being objects of the preposition, must be in the objective case.

Many people make mistakes in constructions like this. It probably harks back to childhood days when parents and teachers would constantly correct their “Maria and me are going” to “Maria and I are going.” This can create the mistaken belief that the construction “Maria and me” is always wrong.

Here’s a quick and easy way to check yourself in this sort of situation. Say the sentence to yourself, dropping the “Maria and.” Which would sound correct, “Andreas gave the money to me” or “Andreas gave the money to I”? Obviously “me” is the pronoun to use here.

4. The sentence should be written like this:

Danielle can’t make it on Saturday; however, she’ll be over Sunday morning.

5. The comma in this sentence is appropriate in that it comes before a coordinating conjunction separating two principal clauses.
6. This sentence is correct as it stands, though “Bs” can also be written “B’s” and “80s” can be “80’s.” “Phyllis” wouldn’t be correct here because it’s a singular noun and in speaking, one would naturally pronounce a second “s” after the apostrophe. The word “its,” without the apostrophe, would be the possessive form of “it” (for example, “The book has lost its cover”).
7. The sentence should be written as follows:

Three hundred and twenty-five people were invited, but only about two hundred showed up; I personally shook hands with 115 of them.

The normal rule is to write out numbers that can be expressed in one or two words and to use numerals for other numbers. However, a sentence should never begin with a numeral, so 325 was spelled out. Another solution – probably a better one – would be to rewrite the sentence so that it doesn’t begin with a number, for example, “Of the 325 invited guests, only . . .”

8. The date 104 A.D. should be corrected to read A.D. 104.
9. The sentence as written makes it sound as if the car had stopped for a burger. Here’s one way of correcting it:

When I stopped for a burger at a restaurant, my car was stolen.

10. The sentence should read

After work Dad likes to lie down for a nap.

### Enrichment

There are no suggested answers for this activity.

## Section 2: Activity 1

1. Didion’s notebook isn’t a place in which she stores pieces of her own writing; rather, it’s a place in which she jots down ideas, sights, sounds, and snatches of conversation that interest her.
2. Responses will vary somewhat. She seems to keep a notebook in order to keep in touch with herself as she had been in her younger years. We all change as we age, and often we forget things that had been important to us when we were younger – the way we thought and felt and perceived the world. Yet these younger people we all once were are inextricably connected to who we are now, and Joan Didion uses her notebook as a means of looking back and remembering just who she used to be.
3. Responses will be personal. Many people who begin keeping this sort of notebook do make it a lifelong habit.
4. Responses will be entirely personal.
5. Responses will vary. Activity 2 and the Extra Help for this section will suggest a few approaches you might try taking if you have problems coming up with ideas.

## Section 2: Activity 2

1. How did your revising go? Were you able to make many improvements? Did you find the checklist useful? Revising your writing is something at which you'll get better the more you do it. You'll become more sensitive to your areas of weakness – as well as your areas of strength – and gradually you'll be able to incorporate improvements in those areas right into your first-draft writing.
2. What follows is a corrected version of the narrative composition with which to compare your own. Use your writer's handbook to look up reasons for any corrections you don't understand, bearing in mind that sometimes there may be more than one way to correct a problem. A short discussion follows the corrected narrative.

We started on our hike at about 8 a.m. We were travelling light: we each had a canteen full of water, a couple of sandwiches for lunch, chocolate bars for that old sugar fix, and emergency supplies like matches and bandages.

At first everything was going pretty well. The sun was up, but it was nice and cool and quiet in the mountains. Our spirits were high, but that was soon to change.

The first thing that happened was that Louie tripped on a rock and aggravated his old knee injury.

"How are you doing?" I asked.

"Not too well," Louie replied. "I feel as if there's a knife stuck in my knee!"

But good old Louie, who can always be relied on, naturally insisted on going on even though he was now limping really badly.

"We all have to do our part," he said, "but I wish I hadn't made contact with that rock. The guy who put it there should have been shot."

"Well, keep your eyes open!" said Trevor. "There are lots more rocks around."

The next calamity to strike was Anna's bear. Personally, I'm sure there was no bear anywhere around, but Anna swore she heard – and smelled – one. As you can imagine, this bit of information affected us all. We all got really scared because this was grizzly country. Now not one of us was enjoying the hike much. For the next hour or so we all kept looking over our shoulders every few steps, but no one saw a bear.

By the time we got to the end of the trail, we were all exhausted. Louie was limping pretty badly; his knee was swollen, and I didn't like its colour. We all threw down our stuff and took a solemn oath not to go near the mountains for at least a year – all except good old Louie. He was game to do it all again as soon as his knee was healed.

Most of the corrections in this composition are straightforward and deal with basic problems in areas like spelling, punctuation, paragraphing, tense consistency, grammar, and sentence structure. A few, however, may seem confusing. "Being that . . ." is a commonly used expression that's regarded as nonstandard; that is, it's considered unacceptable usage in all but the most informal situations. It could have been corrected by changing the sentence in any one of a number of ways. A more difficult problem occurs with the words "everybody," "everyone," and "each." These are all singular pronouns, so any words referring back to them must also be singular. Until recently "Everybody has to do their part" would have been corrected to "Everybody has to do his part," but this usage is now generally considered unacceptable because of its implied gender discrimination. You could write "Everybody has to do his or her part," but "We all have to do our parts" solves the problem less awkwardly.



## Section 2: Activity 3

1. Responses will vary somewhat, but the essay clearly belongs well on the “personal” side of the scale. In her essay Margaret Laurence discusses her personal reflections about her own writing and experiences. She illustrates her ideas by referring freely and frequently to events in her own life.
2.
  - a. Responses will vary somewhat. Her chief purpose is probably to reflect on her own experiences as a writer and inform her readers about some of her conclusions.
  - b. Responses will vary. Be sure your explanation adequately supports your answer.
3. Responses will vary. Here are a few possible examples:
 

... but those poplar bluffs and the blackness of that soil and the way in which the sky is open from one side of the horizon to the other. . . .

... I finally came to see my grandfather not only as the repressive authoritarian figure from my childhood, but also as a boy who had to leave school in Ontario. . . .

... a writer such as I, who came from a Scots-Irish background of stern values and hard work and puritanism, and who grew up during the drought and depression of the thirties and then the war.
4. Responses will be personal. Did you illustrate your ideas with specific, concrete examples as Margaret Laurence did?

## Séction 2: Follow-up Activities

### Extra Help

1. How did your webbing work out? You may well have been using this technique for years. Not only does it work for generating and organizing ideas, but it can also serve as an excellent method for taking notes at a lecture or speech.
2. This is the second time you’ve tried this sort of technique in this section. It probably seems a touch bizarre if it’s new to you, but most writers find that freewriting does help unlock their creative forces.

### Enrichment

There are no suggested answers for this activity.

## Section 3: Activity 1

1. Responses will be personal. Did you feel peaceful? quiet? calm? Did you experience other emotions? Did the poem bring back feelings you’ve felt when absorbed in a good book?
2.
  - a. Examples will vary. The words *quiet* and *calm* were used four and five times respectively. The phrases “the house was quiet” and “the world was calm” were each used three times. Did you notice other examples of repetition?
  - b. Responses will vary somewhat, but you probably found the repetition calming.
3. Responses will vary somewhat. The poem is full of words with which most readers would have peaceful, pleasant, associations. Examples would be
 

• house	• summer night	• reader
• calm	• book	• scholar

Note that virtually all the words used in the poem are short, everyday words and that the sentences are simple (and repetitive). The reader needn't struggle at all with the poem; it almost reads itself. Did you notice anything else about the poem's diction?

4. Were you able to convey – or even enhance – the poem's mood in your oral interpretation? How did you decide to read it? Quickly or slowly? Gently or abruptly? Did you use a lot of variation in speed, pitch, and volume; or did you find that a steady, uniform delivery best suited the poem's mood?

### Section 3: Activity 2

1. Responses will vary. Do people, perhaps, take some primal pleasure in being frightened or shocked by this sort of bizarre story that just may be true? Might these stories circulate to counteract the numbing quality of our all-too-humdrum lives?

Do you have any other ideas?

2. Most people have heard a number of this sort of story. A famous example – that has continually resurfaced in a variety of forms – is the one about the driver who picked up a young girl hitchhiking. The girl sat in the back seat and told the man where she lived. When he reached her home, the driver turned around, only to find that his passenger was gone. On talking to the elderly couple who lived in the house, he learned that they'd had a daughter that fit the girl's description, but that she'd disappeared years ago. She'd been last seen hitchhiking on the very stretch of road where the man had picked her up.

It's after only when we hear stories of this sort for the second or third time – usually with different settings and characters – that we begin to suspect their authenticity.

3.
  - a. The moral is that if you work hard and steadily you'll do better than will those with a lot of surface flash but less perseverance.
  - b. Responses may vary somewhat. The moral reflects a high value placed on qualities like dependability, steadiness, reliability, and endurance. The ability to postpone pleasure in favour of a future benefit is clearly valued as well. Qualities like style, beauty, grace, and excellence are downplayed.
  - c. Responses will be personal. Our society has for the most part traditionally subscribed to the values of "The Tortoise and the Hare." This was particularly true in the pioneer days in North America. We've tended to admire steadiness and endurance more than style because clearly these were the qualities required to do the job that needed doing. In recent years, however, in our more affluent society, many people would likely subscribe to a rather different set of values.
4. It's a fable in that it's a short fictional story, it teaches a moral, and its characters are talking animals.
5. Responses will be personal. Is personal satisfaction a sufficient goal in life? Is it a selfish goal? Does it make sense to strive for skills you're ultimately incapable of mastering? Should accomplishment be judged by objective standards or by purely personal ones?

Have you presented your ideas on this question clearly?

6. Responses will vary. Are there any lessons about the nature of art or art criticism? What about things like courtesy and sensitivity in human relationships? What about honesty?
7. Responses will be personal. Good readers should be able to make inferences from what they read, and in a simple fable like "The Camel Dances" surely the inferences the writer is making are obvious. Why, then, might Arnold Lobel have spelled out his moral? What age reader do you think he had in mind when he wrote "The Camel Dances"?

8. Use the list of ideas that follow question 8 in your Module Booklet as a basis for comparison.
9. Responses will vary. In your critique did you consider such things as the storyteller’s confidence, his knowledge of the story, his voice techniques, his ability to keep and sustain the reader’s interest?

Did you have ideas about what you might have done differently?

10. a. Responses will vary. Here are some possible ideas with which to compare your own:

	Mood	Tone	Purpose
Story 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• sombre</li><li>• depressing</li><li>• serious</li><li>• heavy</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• serious</li><li>• ironic</li><li>• angry</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• to inform</li></ul>
Story 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• light</li><li>• comic</li><li>• humorous</li><li>• happy</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• ironic</li><li>• playful</li><li>• relaxed</li><li>• satirical</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• to entertain</li><li>• to amuse</li></ul>

- b. Reasons and details will vary. In your responses you should have pointed to such factors as diction (words used and level of language), tone and pitch of voice, speed of delivery, and so on. Did you point to specific examples? You might, for example, in dealing with diction, point to informal expressions like “Gross” and “Picture this” in the second story as contrasted with more formal words such as “intimation” and “excruciatingly” in the first.
11. How successful were you in creating the mood you wanted? Was your tone appropriate? How did your audience respond?

Many students feel self-conscious about this sort of speaking exercise. Don’t worry if you’re one of them. The fact is that the more of it you do, the more natural – and the more enjoyable – it will seem.

Section 3: Activity 3

1. a. The fictional world of “Harrison Bergeron” is one in which actual equality of ability is strictly enforced among all human beings. It’s a world in which laws are rigid and human freedom seems to be minimized. It’s an uninviting world – one in which repression and human degradation seem to exist in the name of equality for all.
- b. Responses will vary. Probably the line “Nobody was smarter than anybody else” was your first solid cue.
2. Responses will vary, but the simple fact that a student and a machine are communicating like two human beings is a strong indication. The frustration shown by the teaching machine tells us that in this world machines have definite human qualities.
3. a. “The Dead Child” is set in a small village in Manitoba, obviously a few generations back. The world seems simple, the people poor. The fact that a teacher had left his (or her) job, simply, perhaps, because of discouragement, coupled with the fact that the narrator took over the post almost out of desperation, creates for the reader a feeling that this world is a rather desolate, depressed, and uninviting one.
- b. Responses will vary. There are many concrete details that quickly alert the reader.



4. Vonnegut's references to details like specific amendments to the constitution help create verisimilitude. The reference to people's impatience for spring during April's rains also contributes to this effect.

Did you spot other details?

5. The student's errors in spelling and grammar help create a sense of realism. And who hasn't heard a teacher correct a student's "Can I . . . ?" to "May I . . . ?"
6. Predictions, of course, will vary. It seems clear from the title that the story will be about George and Hazel's son, Harrison. Since it was the "Handicapper General" who took Harrison away, it seems likely that Harrison is exceptionally gifted – perhaps too gifted for ordinary handicapping equipment (like George's mental handicap radio) to overcome. Perhaps the story will be about Harrison's struggle to assert his individuality in this clearly repressive society.

Were you able to pick up other clues? What about those tears in Hazel's clothes? Is it likely that George will throw off his handicap radio and rebel? Is it significant that *Harrison* is a rather unusual name while *George* and *Hazel* are rather commonplace?

7. Were your predictions more or less accurate – at least in general terms? If they weren't, don't worry; no one expects you to predict accurately from reading one page of a story. Reading fiction would be pretty dull if this were usually possible. But you should try always to look for clues, hypothesize, and make inferences and predictions while you read works of fiction.
8. Responses will vary. Is your impression of the world now different from your impression after reading the first page?

All readers should agree that the world of "Harrison Bergeron" is an unappealing one – repressive, controlled – a world without colour, happiness, freedom. The human spirit has been deadened in this world. Ironically, this deadening has been done in the name of promoting equality.

9. a. and b. Responses will vary, but it seems clear that Vonnegut opted for deliberate exaggeration in order to make his point. Few readers would really accept things like George's mental handicap radio and the ballerina's ugly mask, let alone all of Harrison's handicaps. In fact, the red-rubber-ball nose and black tooth-caps seem designed to make readers chuckle. This sort of tongue-in-cheek exaggeration increases toward the story's end when all attempts at realism seem to have been abandoned and Harrison is shown to perform superhuman feats. (Though the ending itself gives the reader a harsh dose of realism, there's no pleasant but hard-to-swallow happy resolution to "Harrison Bergeron.")

Why might Vonnegut have abandoned verisimilitude this way? Why would he have waited until relatively late in the story to do this sort of thing? Do you think the story would have been better if he'd opted for a more realistic approach?

### Section 3: Follow-up Activities

#### Extra Help

1., 2., and 3. What did you discover in your examination of comic book and TV fictional worlds? Normally, the more mature the reader or viewer, the more realism that person demands in the fiction he or she reads or views. That doesn't mean science fiction and fantasy necessarily lose their appeal, but it must be good science fiction and fantasy if it's to be satisfying. And that means verisimilitude must be achieved and maintained throughout.

#### Enrichment

There are no suggested answers for this activity.

## **NOTES**

## NOTES





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